

Exalted Aphorisms And Pearls Of Speech

A Translation of:

Ghurar Al-Hikam
Wa Durar Al-Kalim

A Collection of Aphorisms of:

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.

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Asghar Mirza Changezi (ibne Mirza Mumtaz Hussain)

Noorjehan Begum (binte Syed Wiraat Ali Rizvi)

Agha Meher Qasim Qizalbash (ibne Agha Mumtaz Hussain)

And all momineen & mominaat

Notes on this (English only) version.

- *I was looking at creating posters of sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s. to make available for people to read, this book happens to be the first step in creating an English only document.*
- *In case anyone requires an editable document (in .docx format) they can please contact me.*

~ Mirza Kamal Asghar Changezi

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

In the name of Allah, the all-Beneficent the all-Merciful After praising Allah, without whose help and blessing no work would be possible and without whose grace and mercy no sinful creature would walk the face of this earth, and sending salutations on His most beloved Messenger (s), the greatest man to set foot on this earth and the best of role models for the entire humankind, this humble servant presents the following translation that is dedicated to the Master of the Believers, Commander of the Faithful and the Beloved of the Prophet (s) - 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib ('a).

Ghurar al-Ḥikam wa Durar al-Kalim is a late fifth or early sixth century work that comprises of the aphorisms and short sayings of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Ṭālib('a). The sayings, which number more than eleven thousand, contain words of wisdom and advice that can benefit everyone in their daily lives. It is for this reason that we embarked on translating this work. We hope that, God-willing, it will be a source of inspiration to all those who read it.

There are many different extant copies of this book and in one recent edition, the original alphabetical listing of sayings have been rearranged and categorized subject-wise. It is the translation of this version of the work that we present before you. Translating a work such as this poses numerous challenges.

Firstly, this work is comprised of traditions in the form of aphorisms and short sayings, many of which have been extracted from other longer traditions, sermons and letters.

As such, in many cases the context of the narration is missing and needs to be investigated.

Another challenge is that in many cases it is evident that there have been changes inadvertently made by the narrators or the scribes and hence other possible forms of the sayings are mentioned in brackets. Here we have translated the other possible forms in parenthesis and have included what we have inferred from the text in square brackets for the sake of clarification and fluidity. Alternative translations and explanatory notes have been included in the footnotes.

In addition, there are certain sayings that are difficult to comprehend and accept. An example of this can be seen in the section on the sayings about women. Here we would urge the readers to refer to what the scholars and commentators have said about such narrations and how they should be interpreted.

The seven volume commentary written by the respected scholar 'Allāma Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwansāri has been helpful in understanding many of the seemingly ambiguous sayings. In cases where we were unable to gain a satisfactory understanding of the sayings, our respected teachers in the ḥawza were more than willing to spare their time in order to assist. For this I thank them and pray that the Almighty reward them amply. Lastly, the classical dictionaries have, as always, been an invaluable resource during the translation.

Though all effort has been made to present an accurate translation of the sayings, we take full responsibility for any mistakes and errors in the translation and seek forgiveness from the Almighty for the same.

In closing, we would like to express our appreciation to Sayyid Muhammad Ridha Shushtari for facilitating this translation and Ansariyan Publications for arranging the typesetting (along with inclusion of the original Arabic text) and publication of this work.

Tahir Ridha Jaffer

Qum al-Muqaddasah

1433 A.H.

Notes

1. Some of these different copies even have some differing narrations (Ref: Nigāhi be Kitābe Ghurar al-Ḥikam, Sayyid Muḥammad Raḍawī, Safine, no. 4, Autumn 1383 Hijri Solar).
2. The most common source from which the author has taken sayings is the Nahj al-Balāgha.

ABOUT THE COMPILER

The compiler of this work was the great scholar and muḥaddith **Qādhi Nāsiḥ al-Dīn Abu al-Faṭḥ ‘Abd al-Wāhid** ibn Muḥammad ibn ‘Abd al-Wāhid al-Āmudī al-Tamīmī from the scholars of the fifth century who passed away in 510 AH.

He was a contemporary of Sayyid Radhi, Sayyid Murtadha and Shaykh Ṭusi.

Some of the great scholars such as Ibn Shahr Āshub, ‘Allāma Majlisi and Muḥaddith Nūri, have praised him and considered his work to be of great value. Many of these scholars have also narrated from him.

There has been some discussion about al-Āmudī’s beliefs because he used the phrase *karramallāhu wajhahu* (may Allah honour him) for Imam ‘Ali (‘a) in his introduction to this book, and this is the practice of the Sunnis and not the Shi’as. However, the great scholar Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad Khwansāri notes that this was either done out of precautionary dissimulation (*taqiyya*) or was an addition by one of the scribes. He further mentions some arguments to dispel any doubts about al-Āmudī’s being an Imāmi scholar. These are summarized as follows:

1. The fact that Ibn Shahr Āshub mentions him as one of his teachers in his book *Ma’ālim al ‘Ulamā* and notes that he was an Imāmi scholar.
2. Ibn Shahr Āshub also mentions him again in his other book *al-Manāqib*
3. and states that he was a Shi’a scholar.
4. Whoever examines this book will notice that many of the narrations have been compiled from other Shi’a books.
5. This book contains certain narrations that can only be narrated by a Shi’a such as the narrations about the Holy Prophet (s) and his progeny.

Our esteemed teacher and student of the late Ayatullah Sayyid Abu al-Qāsim al-Khui (r), Ayatullah Muslim al-Dāwari (may Allah grant him a long life), argues that the fourth point cannot be considered as proof since many Sunni scholars have mentioned such traditions about the family of the Prophet (s). He further adds that the compiler’s reliability (*tawthīq*) has not been established even though he was known to be one of the teachers of Ibn Shahr Āshub.

Another important point to note is that there is no chain of transmitters (*ṭarīq*) for this book so its authenticity and reliability comes into question. This, however, does not mean that the narrations contained in it are all inauthentic and unreliable. Rather, it only means that we cannot be certain about the origins of this work and hence need to ascertain the authenticity and source of each narration before we can attribute it to the Imam (‘a).

Also, since the compiler has not listed the chains of narrators of the narrations, it would be impossible to authenticate any saying that cannot be found in any other source where the chain of transmission has been mentioned and can hence be verified using the normal processes of scrutiny.

A recent effort to expand on the work of al-Āmudī is the book *Ikmalu Ghurar al-Ḥikam* by Mahdi al-Ansari al-Qummiin which 15,751 more aphorisms of Amīr al-Mu’minīn (‘a) have been added to the original title from twenty other ḥadīth sources, both Sunni and Shi’i.

Notes

1. Or al-Āmidī
2. There seems to be a difference of opinion about the year of his death. Some scholars say it was in 550 AH and others say it was 510 AH.
3. Mirza ‘Abdullah Afandi has also mentioned this explanation.
4. Like the narration where Imam ‘Ali (‘a) says: I am the allotter of hellfire, the treasurer of the gardens [of Paradise], the owner of the pond [of Kawthar]... - see the section on Muhammad (s) and his progeny.
5. This work was published in Iran in 1425 AH.

INTRODUCTION

In the name of Allah, the all-Beneficent the all-Merciful All praise is due to Allah who led us with His guidance to His path and made us excel above all His servants through [belief in] His Oneness. I glorify Him for all the single and paired bounties, a glorifying the limits of which cannot be comprehended and the magnitude of which cannot be fathomed by the imaginations.

I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, alone, without any partner -the witnessing of one whose tongue speaks veraciously and whose heart is filled up with the truth. And I bear witness that Muhammad is His chosen servant from among the servants and His messenger who called the people to the path of guidance. He sent him while the nations were following falsehoods and treading on misguided ways, one after another.

So Allah, the Glorified, introduced to them, through His prophet (s), the ways of the religion [of truth], and clarified for them the paths of certitude, until the truth became illuminated and gleamed and falsehood was destroyed and perished. May the blessings of Allah be [showered] upon him and his progeny, the pure leaders, and the chosen infallible people of his household, and [on] his selected virtuous companions, blessings that neither cease in the [late] hours of the night nor [in] parts of the day.

The one who has committed excesses against his soul and is in need of the mercy of his Lord, 'Abd al-Wāḥid ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Wāḥid al-Āmudī al-Tamīmī, said: The thing that motivated me to compile, annotate, and compose this book, was that which Abu 'Uthmān al-Jāḥidh was successful in doing. He enumerated and wrote down in his manuscript a list of one hundred wise and eloquent sayings that were not widely known, on various topics, from Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib ('a). So I said: How astonishing it is that this man who was the most learned of his time, unmatched by his contemporaries, despite his great knowledge and erudition, having ascended to the peak of understanding, with his closeness to the first era, and his possessing a great share and a large portion of virtues and excellent merits; how could he shut his eyes from the luminous full moon and content himself with so little from so much? And is this not but a fraction of the whole, a little of the innumerable and a drizzle from the downpour?

And I despite my covered heart and falling short from the station of perfection, and my acknowledgement of my inability to recognize the excellences of the hearts of the foremost, and my falling short from following in their footsteps and my insignificance in comparison to their greatness - have compiled a small number of of his short aphorisms and a few of his wise sayings which render even the most eloquent ones mute and make the wisest sages despair of matching it. Allah knows that in this endeavour I am only like a person who takes with his hand from the sea and acknowledges his shortcoming, even if it may seem an exaggeration, but why not? When he ('a) has drank from the spring of Prophethood and possesses in his heart divine knowledge, as he (may Allah honour him) says, and his words are true and his speech veracious, based on what the narrators have narrated: verily I have much knowledge in my heart; if only I came across someone who could bear it!

I have omitted the chains of narrators from it and have arranged it alphabetically, placing together the aphorisms and sayings that rhyme and exhibit assonance so that it falls more easily upon the ears and is grasped quicker by the hearts and minds, because of the intense inclination of the souls towards poetical speech and their dislike for prosaic form. In this way its readers may easily commit it to memory and it may become a source of joy for those who examine it, having been extracted from its masterpiece with my cutting off most of it out of fear of lengthening [it] and sufficing with that which contains a remedy from hardships and difficulties for the people of intellect and understanding.

And I have named it Ghurar al-Hikam wa Durar al-Kalim (Exalted Aphorisms and Pearls of Speech) in the hope of getting reward from Allah, the Glorified, while seeking refuge with Him, the Most High, from every flaw. And my success is from none save Allah; in Him I have put my trust and to Him will be my return.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Parents	16	38. Insistence	45
2. The Camel	16	39. The Innocent	45
3. The Son Of Adam (The Human Being).....	16	40. Being Cheerful And Smiling.....	45
4. Grandeur	16	41. Sight, Observation And Insight	46
5. Self-Sacrifice.....	16	42. Wantonness	47
6. The Appointed Time Of Death	17	43. Falsehood And Assisting It	47
7. The Hereafter	18	44. The Falsifier.....	47
8. The Brother, The Friend, The Associate And The Companion.....	21	45. The Stomach And The Private Parts.....	47
9. Good Etiquette.....	28	46. Early Rising	47
10. Harm And Preventing Harm	29	47. Weeping.....	48
11. Eating.....	30	48. Countries And Homelands	48
12. Allah And His Attributes	30	49. Eloquence	48
13. Matters	31	50. Attention.....	48
14. Enjoining Good And Forbidding Evil	32	51. The Umayyads.....	48
15. Hopes And Aspirations	33	52. Quadrupeds And Predators	48
16. The Leader	35	53. Fabricating Lies	48
17. Leadership	35	54. The House Of Allah	48
18. Granting Refuge To The Fearful.....	35	55. The Treasury	49
19. The Secure	36	56. Trade And Business With Allah	49
20. Security	36	57. The Merchant	49
21. Feeling Secure From Allah's Scheme	36	58. Earth.....	49
22. The Trustworthy	36	59. Abandoning For The Sake Of Allah	49
23. Trustworthiness	36	60. Repentance And Returning (To Allah)	49
24. Faith.....	37	61. Relying On Allah.....	50
25. The Believer	39	62. Reward.....	50
26. The Human Being	41	63. Garments	50
27. Intimacy With Allah	41	64. Cowardice	50
28. Intimacy	41	65. Diligence And Striving	50
29. Deliberateness And Acting Unhurriedly	41	66. Experience	50
30. One Who Acts With Deliberateness	42	67. The Experienced	51
31. Strengthening Oneself.....	42	68. Anxiety	51
32. Misery	42	69. Requitel And Reward	51
33. Stinginess And Avarice.....	42	70. The Body	52
34. The Miser And The Avaricious	43	71. Antipathy	52
35. Taking The Initiative.....	44	72. Loftiness.....	52
36. Cold Weather.....	45	73. Intercourse.....	52
37. Righteousness And Those Who Prevent It.....	45	74. Beauty	52
		75. The Beautiful.....	52
		76. Grooming	52

77.	Moderation	52	116.	The Jealous.....	67
78.	Paradise And The People Of Paradise.....	53	117.	The Envied.....	67
79.	Generosity	53	118.	The Sword And The Steed	67
80.	The Generous	54	119.	Good Deeds	67
81.	Proximity To Allah.....	54	120.	Good Turns And Benevolent Actions	68
82.	Neighbours	54	121.	The Good Doer.....	74
83.	Hunger	55	122.	Physical Beauty	75
84.	High Rank.....	55	123.	Dyslogia (The Inability To Express Oneself Effectively)	75
85.	Struggle (Jihad)	55	124.	Fortune	75
86.	Struggling Against The Self (Jihad An-Nafs)	55	125.	Gaining Favour	75
87.	Ignorance	56	126.	Digging A Pit For A Brother	75
88.	The Ignorant and the Foolish.....	57	127.	Spite And Malice	75
89.	Hell Fire.....	59	128.	The Spiteful	75
90.	Lovers Of The Ahlulbayt.....	59	129.	Belittling Others	76
91.	The Beloved	59	130.	Verification.....	76
92.	Evidence.....	60	131.	The Truth	76
93.	The Proof (Of Allah)	60	132.	One Who Is On The Right.....	78
94.	The Disproved	60	133.	The Rights Of Allah, The Most High	78
95.	The One Who Presents An Argument.....	60	134.	Rights Of The People.....	78
96.	The Hajj.....	60	135.	Hoarding And Hoarders	78
97.	Rage	60	136.	The Ordinances Of Allah	78
98.	The Cautious	60	137.	Wisdom	78
99.	The Warner	60	138.	The Wise	79
100.	War, Soldiers And Armies	60	139.	Government And Sovereignty.....	80
101.	Waging War	61	140.	The Ruler And Governor	81
102.	Freedom And The Free	62	141.	False Oaths.....	81
103.	The Careful	62	142.	The Lawful.....	81
104.	Greed	62	143.	Dreams.....	81
105.	The Greedy	63	144.	The Forebearing.....	81
106.	Vocation.....	63	145.	Forbearance	82
107.	The Prohibited	64	146.	Praise	83
108.	Deprivation And Frustration	64	147.	The Praiseworthy And The Disgraceful	83
109.	The Party Of Allah	64	148.	Muhammad (S) And His Progeny	83
110.	Judiciousness	64	149.	Foolishness.....	88
111.	The Judicious	65	150.	The Fool	89
112.	Grief For What Has Been Lost.....	66	151.	Tolerance	89
113.	The Reckoning	66	152.	Vehemence	90
114.	High Regard	66	153.	Abstinence [From Food]	90
115.	Jealousy	66	154.	Fulfilling Needs.....	90

155.	Expressing Your Needs	91	194.	Choice	103
156.	How Are You?	91	195.	The Choice Of Allah	103
157.	The Perplexed	91	196.	Treachery And Disloyalty	103
158.	Recourse	91	197.	The Treacherous	104
159.	Life And Being Alive	91	198.	The Diligent And The Hardworking	104
160.	Modesty And Shame.....	91	199.	Following Up Matters	104
161.	Narration And Transmission Of Information	92	200.	One Who Turns Back And The One Who Moves Forward.....	104
162.	Gauging People.....	92	201.	Planning	104
163.	Deception And The Deceitful.....	93	202.	Desertion And Abandonment	105
164.	The Servant.....	93	203.	Turning Backward	105
165.	The One Who Is Forsaken By Allah	93	204.	Entrance.....	105
166.	Muteness	93	205.	Gradually Drawing Closer To Destruction.....	105
167.	Ineptness	93	206.	Study	105
168.	The Loser	93	207.	Rectification And Making Amends.....	105
169.	Submissiveness And Humility In Front Of Allah	94	208.	Amicableness	106
170.	The Foe Of Allah	94	209.	Supplication And The Suppliant	106
171.	Writing	94	210.	The Call	107
172.	Ideas	94	211.	The Guide.....	107
173.	The Daring	94	212.	Seriously Ill	107
174.	Mistakes.....	94	213.	The Despicable.....	107
175.	Sincerity And Devotion	94	214.	Loathsome Actions And Traits	107
176.	Sucession	95	215.	This World.....	107
177.	The Caliphs.....	95	216.	Remedy And Ailment	120
178.	Disagreement	95	217.	Alternation Of Power And Sovereignty.....	121
179.	Good Character.....	96	218.	Flattery.....	121
180.	Creation	99	219.	Debt	121
181.	Seclusion.....	99	220.	Religion And Sharia Law.....	121
182.	Wine	99	221.	The Savings	124
183.	Five Bad Qualities	99	222.	Remembrance [Of Allah] And The Reminder..	124
184.	Anonymity	100	223.	Vices And Those Who Commit Them.....	126
185.	Fear	100	224.	Divulgence [Of Secrets].....	128
186.	Fearing Other Than Allah	101	225.	The Compassionate.....	128
187.	The Fearful	101	226.	Opinions And The Opinonated.....	128
188.	Frightening Others.....	101	227.	Showing Off.....	129
189.	The Frustrated	101	228.	Profit And Gain.....	129
190.	Good	101	229.	Hope In [The Mercy Of] Allah And [In] Others	129
191.	Good Of This World And The Hereafter	103	230.	Mercy And Compassion	130
192.	Seeking What Is Best	103	231.	Near Relatives And Keeping Or Cutting Off Ties With Them	131
193.	The Virtuous	103			

232.	Ease.....	132	271.	Extravagance.....	145
233.	Restraint	132	272.	Theft.....	146
234.	Depravities.....	132	273.	Aid	146
235.	Sustenance And One Who Seeks It.....	132	274.	Felicity	146
236.	Confiding In Others.....	133	275.	The Felicitous	147
237.	The Messenger And His Message	133	276.	Striving And Seeking	147
238.	Rectitude And Right Guidance.....	133	277.	Travel	147
239.	Being Pleased And Satisfied.....	134	278.	The Envoy.....	147
240.	Desire And Longing	135	279.	Spilling Blood	147
241.	Leniency And Gentleness.....	135	280.	The Ships Of Salvation	147
242.	Self-Scrutiny.....	136	281.	Dimwittedness	147
243.	Mode Of Transport	136	282.	The Dimwit.....	148
244.	The Souls.....	137	283.	Maladies.....	148
245.	Peace Of Mind	137	284.	Calmness and Solemnity	148
246.	The Intended Objective	137	285.	The Preceding	149
247.	Discipline	137	286.	Salāms And Greetings	149
248.	Restraint	137	287.	Peace and Reconciliation	149
249.	Charity	137	288.	Islam.....	149
250.	Lapses	137	289.	The Muslims.....	149
251.	Adultery	137	290.	Submission To The Will Of Allah	149
252.	The Wife	137	291.	Security	150
253.	Provision	138	292.	The One Who Surrenders	150
254.	Renunciation Of Worldly Pleasures	138	293.	Forgetfulness	150
255.	Visiting	140	294.	Condolences and Congratulations	150
256.	Adornment	140	295.	Mien.....	150
257.	Begging And Asking People	140	296.	Hearing and Sight.....	151
258.	Question And Answer	141	297.	Listening and The Listener	151
259.	Causes And Means.....	141	298.	Righteous Practices.....	151
260.	Competition.....	142	299.	Doing Wrong To Others	151
261.	Prostration And Bowing.....	142	300.	Procrastination.....	151
262.	Prison	142	301.	Eminence And The Eminent.....	151
263.	Displeasure	142	302.	Markets.....	152
264.	Generosity	142	303.	Night Vigil.....	152
265.	Aptness	144	304.	Facilitation	152
266.	Mirage.....	144	305.	Mode Of Conduct.....	152
267.	Dismissal	144	306.	Administrative Policies.....	153
268.	Inward Thoughts And Feelings	144	307.	Youth.....	153
269.	Secret And Discussions	144	308.	Overeating And Gluttony	153
270.	Happiness And Putting Joy In The Hearts	145	309.	Vilification	153

310.	Courage And The Courageous	154	349.	Vainglory	173
311.	Difficulties	154	350.	Prayer And One Who Stands For Prayer	173
312.	Evil And The Wicked	154	351.	Silence	173
313.	Honour And The Honourable.....	155	352.	Hardships	174
314.	East And West.....	156	353.	The One Who Hits The Mark And The One Who Errs	175
315.	Polytheism	156	354.	Correctness	176
316.	Partnership	156	355.	Countenance.....	176
317.	Voraciousness And The Voracious.....	156	356.	Fasting.....	176
318.	Satan.....	157	357.	Giving Examples And Using Metaphors	176
319.	Being Occupied	157	358.	Laughter	176
320.	The Intercessor and Interceder	158	359.	Suffering.....	176
321.	Dissension	158	360.	Necessities	177
322.	Wretchedness	158	361.	Weakness.....	177
323.	The Wretched	158	362.	Error And Deviation	177
324.	Gratitude And The Grateful	158	363.	Inner Consciences	177
325.	Doubt And Misgiving	161	364.	Hospitality.....	177
326.	Complaining Of Distress	162	365.	Agony	177
327.	Schadenfreude.....	162	366.	Jubilation.....	177
328.	Consultation And Deliberation	162	367.	The Way and The Course	177
329.	Eagerness And Longing	163	368.	Food And Sustenance	178
330.	Lust	164	369.	Feeding Others.....	178
331.	The Martyr	165	370.	Criticism	178
332.	Testimony	165	371.	Obedience And Compliance.....	178
333.	Fame And Renown.....	165	372.	Obeying Commandments	181
334.	Grey Hair Of Old Age	165	373.	The Tyrant	181
335.	The Followers (Shi'a)	166	374.	The Seeker	181
336.	The Disgrace Of A Man	166	375.	Matters That Are Pursued.....	181
337.	Patience And The Patient	166	376.	The Sought After	181
338.	Young Children	169	377.	Covetousness	181
339.	Good Health And The Healthy	169	378.	Haughtiness	183
340.	The Chest	170	379.	Innermost Thoughts.....	183
341.	Charities	170	380.	Frivolity	183
342.	Truthfulness.....	170	381.	Victory.....	183
343.	The Truthful	172	382.	Injustice And Oppression	183
344.	Change Of Circumstances.....	172	383.	The Unjust.....	185
345.	The Rigid	172	384.	The Oppressed	186
346.	Welfare Of The Believers	172	385.	Usurped Rights.....	187
347.	Being Dutiful With Allah	172	386.	Conjecture.....	187
348.	Reforming The People	173	387.	Support	188

388.	Precaution	188	427.	Outcomes.....	206
389.	The Exteriors.....	188	428.	Filial Impiety.....	206
390.	Lightness of One's Burden	188	429.	The Intellect	206
391.	Servitude.....	188	430.	The Intelligent	210
392.	Worship And The Worshipper	188	431.	The Cause And The Effects.....	214
393.	Servants	189	432.	The Celestial Realm.....	214
394.	Taking Lessons And Examples.....	190	433.	Knowledge	214
395.	Reprimand	192	434.	The Scholar	218
396.	Emancipation.....	192	435.	Education And Learning	220
397.	Slip Up.....	192	436.	The Student.....	221
398.	Conceit.....	192	437.	Age And Lifespan	221
399.	The Self-Admiring One.....	193	438.	Development And Prosperity.....	222
400.	Inability	193	439.	Delving Deep	222
401.	The Powerless.....	193	440.	Actions And Deeds	222
402.	The Derriere.....	194	441.	Dealings.....	227
403.	Haste And The Hasty.....	194	442.	Blindness And The Blind.....	227
404.	The Denumerable	194	443.	The Obstinate.....	227
405.	Readiness And Preparation	194	444.	Descent And Lineage.....	227
406.	Justice And The Just.....	195	445.	Violence	227
407.	The Middle Course.....	196	446.	That Which Is Of No Concern	227
408.	Enmity And The Enemy.....	196	447.	The Crooked.....	227
409.	Apologizing And Offering Excuses	198	448.	Habit	228
410.	Dignity And Reputation	198	449.	Resurrection And The Hour	228
411.	Cognizance.....	199	450.	The Masses	228
412.	The Cognizant	199	451.	Assistance	228
413.	Glory And The Honoured One	200	452.	Seeking Assistance	228
414.	Seclusion.....	200	453.	Succor	229
415.	Resolve.....	200	454.	Keeping Promises And Fulfilling Pledges	229
416.	Adversity.....	201	455.	Flaws And Faults	230
417.	Social Interaction And Mingling.....	201	456.	Taunting.....	232
418.	The Lover	202	457.	Lifestyle.....	232
419.	Seeking Protection From Allah	202	458.	Lowering The Gaze.....	232
420.	Preserving Oneself From Sin.....	203	459.	Seeing.....	233
421.	Destruction And Damage.....	203	460.	Helper	233
422.	Empathy.....	203	461.	Inarticulateness.....	233
423.	Respect	203	462.	Outcome	233
424.	Chastity	203	463.	The Envable.....	233
425.	Well-Being	204	464.	The Deceived	233
426.	Forgiveness And Pardon	204	465.	Imbecility	233

466.	Treachery.....	234	505.	Ignominy	245
467.	Delusion	234	506.	Virtues And Vices	245
468.	Usurpation	235	507.	The Superfluous	245
469.	Anger	235	508.	؁Astuteness	246
470.	Seeking Forgiveness.....	236	509.	Loss	246
471.	Negligence	236	510.	Poverty.....	246
472.	The Negligent.....	237	511.	The Pauper	246
473.	The Victor And The Vanquished	237	512.	The Learned Scholars	247
474.	Fighting	237	513.	Thinking And The Thinker	247
475.	istake	237	514.	Successfulness	249
476.	Betrayal.....	237	515.	Leaving The Matter To Allah	249
477.	Rancor And Perfidy	237	516.	Understanding	249
478.	Grief.....	238	517.	Graves	249
479.	Being Independent Of Others.....	238	518.	Facing Issues	249
480.	Affluence And The Rich.....	238	519.	Turning Towards Allah	249
481.	Coming To The Aid Of The Aggrieved	239	520.	Martyrdom In The Way of Allah	250
482.	Backbiting	239	521.	Plunging In	250
483.	The Unseen	240	522.	Power And Might	250
484.	Sense Of Honour And Possessiveness	240	523.	Status And Worth	250
485.	Deviation From The Right Path.....	240	524.	Undertaking	250
486.	The Utmost	240	525.	To Follow.....	250
487.	Being Optimistic.....	240	526.	The Qur'an	251
488.	Unrest	240	527.	The Near One	252
489.	The One Who Is Enthralled	241	528.	Attaining Nearness To Allah.....	252
490.	Chivalry	241	529.	Admission And Confession Of One's Sins	252
491.	Wickedness And Immorality	241	530.	Lending To Allah.....	252
492.	Obscenity	241	531.	Knocking The Door	252
493.	Pride And Boasting	242	532.	The [Allotted] Share.....	252
494.	Relief And Waiting For Relief.....	242	533.	Hard-Heartedness.....	253
495.	Happiness And Joy	242	534.	Goals	253
496.	Fleeing To Allah	242	535.	Moderation	253
497.	Opportunity And Its Loss	242	536.	One Who Is Neglectful And Falls Short	253
498.	The Obligatory And Recommended Acts.....	243	537.	Retaliation.....	253
499.	Neglect.....	244	538.	Divine Decree And Destiny	254
500.	Idleness.....	244	539.	Judges	254
501.	Separation And Isolation	244	540.	Being Cut Off From Allah	255
502.	Fabrication Of Lies	244	541.	Sitting Back	255
503.	Corruption	244	542.	Emulation.....	255
504.	Indolence And Lassitude.....	244	543.	The Heart	255

544.	Little.....	256	583.	Plots	271
545.	The Least.....	256	584.	The Sagacious	271
546.	Being Less	256	585.	There Is No God But Allah	272
547.	Qunut (Raising Hands In Supplication)	256	586.	Vileness	272
548.	Despair	257	587.	The Vile	272
549.	Contentment And The Contented	257	588.	Confusion	273
550.	Acquisitions	258	589.	Milk	273
551.	Speech And Speaking.....	259	590.	The Stubborn	274
552.	Steadfastness.....	262	591.	Stubbornness	274
553.	Establishing The Command Of Allah.....	262	592.	Importunity.....	274
554.	The Strong	262	593.	Important Events	274
555.	Arrogance	262	594.	Insults.....	277
556.	The Arrogant One	263	595.	Pleasure And Delight.....	277
557.	The Book And Writing.....	264	596.	The Tongue	278
558.	Secrecy.....	264	597.	Courteousness	279
559.	Loquaciousness.....	264	598.	Vain Talk.....	279
560.	Amassing [Wealth].....	264	599.	Meeting.....	279
561.	Lying.....	264	600.	Meeting Allah.....	279
562.	The Liar	265	601.	Hinting.....	279
563.	Nobleness And Munificence	266	602.	Reproach, Reprimand And Censure	279
564.	The Noble -Minded And Munificent	266	603.	Amusement.....	280
565.	High Esteem.....	268	604.	Night And Day	280
566.	Noble Traits & Deeds	268	605.	Gentleness And Softness	280
567.	The Disliked	268	606.	Distinction	281
568.	Earnings	268	607.	Tribulations	281
569.	Laziness And The Lazy.....	269	608.	Praise And Extolment.....	281
570.	Revealing & Removing Distress	269	609.	The Human Being.....	282
571.	Suppressing Anger	269	610.	Magnanimity	282
572.	Ingratitude	269	611.	Sickness	284
573.	The Disbeliever	269	612.	Disputation And Argument	284
574.	Disbelief	270	613.	Joking	285
575.	Restraint	270	614.	Walking	285
576.	Sufficiency.....	270	615.	Delay	285
577.	Recompense	270	616.	Scheming.....	285
578.	Competence	270	617.	The Devising Of Allah	285
579.	Duty	271	618.	The Schemer And Plotter	286
580.	The Speaker	271	619.	Flattery.....	286
581.	The Ideal One.....	271	620.	Kings And Rulers	286
582.	Perfection	271	621.	Mālik Al-Ashtar	288

622.	Angels	288	661.	Aversion	302
623.	The Slave.....	288	662.	The Soul And Holding It To Account	303
624.	Disposition	288	663.	Giving And Withholding Charity.....	310
625.	One Who Is Fed-Up.....	288	664.	Hypocrisy	311
626.	Irritation.....	289	665.	The Hypocrite.....	311
627.	The Inaccessible	289	666.	Deficiency.....	311
628.	To Put [Others] Under Obligation.....	289	667.	The Deficient.....	312
629.	Death	289	668.	Revenge	312
630.	The Dead.....	292	669.	Divine Wrath	312
631.	Wealth And Riches.....	292	670.	The Defaulters, The Iniquitous And The Transgressors	312
632.	Inclination	295	671.	Marriages	312
633.	Nobility And The Noble.....	295	672.	Tale-bearing	312
634.	Attentiveness.....	295	673.	People	313
635.	Prophets, Messengers And Imams	295	674.	Sleep	315
636.	Success, Prosperity And Salvation	296	675.	Deputyship	315
637.	Helping And Seeking Help.....	296	676.	Obtainment.....	315
638.	Secret Conversation.....	296	677.	Intention	315
639.	Remorse And Regret.....	296	678.	Reliance On Allah	316
640.	The Remorseful.....	296	679.	Attainment.....	316
641.	Warning	296	680.	Pain	316
642.	Dispute.....	296	681.	Affection And Friendship	317
643.	The Home	297	682.	Piety	318
644.	Remaining Pure And Free From Sin	297	683.	Financial Support	320
645.	Outing	297	684.	Tattletale.....	320
646.	The Devotee	297	685.	Getting Connected To Allah	320
647.	Women	297	686.	Establishing Ties And Relations.....	320
648.	Forgetting Allah	298	687.	Humility.....	320
649.	Sincere Advice	298	688.	Homeland	321
650.	Supporting The Truth.....	299	689.	Admonition	321
651.	Supporting Falsehood.....	299	690.	God-Given Success.....	323
652.	Seeking Support.....	300	691.	Agreement	324
653.	One Whose Supporter Is Allah.....	300	692.	Shamelessness And The Shameless	324
654.	Seeking Justice	300	693.	Impudence	324
655.	Equity.....	300	694.	Reverence	324
656.	The Equitable.....	300	695.	Precautionary Dissimulation	324
657.	The Viewed	301	696.	God-Wariness	324
658.	Being Systematic In Work.....	301	697.	The God-Wary And Godfearing People.....	327
659.	Blessing.....	301	698.	Putting Trust In Allah	328
660.	Trouble	302	699.	The Child	329

700.	The Close Friends And Lovers Of Allah	329	712.	Irresponsibility	332
701.	Lethargy	329	713.	The Frightful.....	332
702.	The Grant.....	330	714.	Disdain	332
703.	Delusion	330	715.	Vain Desire	332
704.	Suspicion.....	330	716.	Dread And Awe	334
705.	True Guidance From Allah	330	717.	Loss Of Hope	334
706.	Gifts	330	718.	Orphans	335
707.	Idle Talk.....	330	719.	Alertness And Vigilance	335
708.	Joking	331	720.	Certitude	335
709.	The Causes Of Downfall And Ruin	331			
710.	The Scandal-Monger.....	331			
711.	Endeavours	331			

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. PARENTS

1. Being good to parents is the greatest [and most important] duty.
2. Be good to your parents and your children will be good to you.
3. Whoever is good to his parents, his child will be good to him.
4. The death of a father breaks one's back.
5. One who scorns his parents has diverged from the right path.
6. The affection of parents is [the basis of] the relationship between siblings.

2. THE CAMEL

1. Seek goodness in the hoofs of the camel when driven away and when coming back.

3. THE SON OF ADAM (THE HUMAN BEING)

1. How wretched the son of Adam is! His death is hidden, his ailments concealed, his every action recorded, harmed by the bite of a mosquito, made malodorous by perspiration and caused to die by [something as simple as] choking.
2. Woe to the son of Adam! How heedless and negligent of his salvation he is!
3. Woe to the son of Adam! A prisoner of hunger, prone to overeating, a target of calamities and a successor of the dead.

4. GRANDEUR

1. It is possible that a person who possesses [apparent] grandeur is actually the lowliest of the low.

5. SELF-SACRIFICE

1. Self-sacrifice is a virtue, hoarding [wealth] is a vice.
2. Self-sacrifice is the noblest benevolence.
3. Self-sacrifice is a trait of the virtuous.
4. Self-sacrifice is the highest degree of benevolence.
5. Self-sacrifice is the noblest munificence.
6. Self-sacrifice is the highest form of benevolence.
7. Self-sacrifice is the loftiest of noble traits.
8. Self-sacrifice is the greatest worship and the most sublime eminence.
9. Self-sacrifice is the highest level of munificence and the most excellent quality.
10. Self-sacrifice is the best [form of] benevolence and the highest stage of faith.
11. Self-sacrifice is a trait of the virtuous and a quality of the righteous.
12. The most excellent generosity is self-sacrifice.
13. The greatest munificence is self-sacrifice.
14. It is through self-sacrifice that the free become enslaved.
15. It is through self-sacrifice that munificence gets true meaning.
16. By preferring others over yourself, you gain [their] servitude.
17. The best of noble traits is self-sacrifice.
18. It is when they prefer others over themselves that the spirit of noble people becomes evident.
19. The highest of noble traits is self-sacrifice.
20. Self-sacrifice suffices as nobility.
21. Whoever prefers others to himself has reached the height of magnanimity.
22. Whoever prefers others to himself deserves to be called a person of virtue.
23. One who prefers you to his property and wealth has preferred you over himself.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

24. From the qualities of the virtuous is impelling themselves to be selfless.
25. One of best [form of] benevolence is self-sacrifice.
26. One of the most excellent choices is adorning oneself with selflessness.
27. Nobility cannot be fully achieved but by self-restraint and self-sacrifice.

Notes

1. *Meaning that when one is selfless, others serve and obey him as though they were his slaves.*

6. THE APPOINTED TIME OF DEATH

1. The appointed time of death is [already] determined and sustenance is [already] apportioned, so let not any of you grieve its reduction; for verily greed does not expedite it and self-restraint does not delay it, and it behoves a believer to be patient.
2. The truest thing is death.
3. The nearest thing is death.
4. The reality of death exposes the lie of [false] aspiration.
5. At every moment there is death.
6. The remembrance of [the times of] death has disappeared from your hearts and has been replaced by false hopes and aspirations.
7. Your hearts have forgotten the reality of death and you have been overcome by deception of [false] hope.
8. The one who takes death into consideration values his time.
9. One whose death draws near to him cannot be saved [from it] by his efforts.
10. The passing of time draws one towards death.
11. How is it possible for one to live forever, when there will come a day which he will not pass and a seeker who will quickly bring him to his death, urging him forwards?
12. It is when [the time of] death comes that the failure of [one's] aspirations become apparent.
13. When death strikes, hopes and aspirations are exposed.
14. Every future [event] is near.
15. How many a person has delayed his work until death came upon him!
16. The appointed time of death is sufficient as a guard.
17. There is a prescribed duration for every term [of life].
18. Death strikes down.
19. Departure [from this world] is imminent.
20. The appointed time of death is a shield.
21. The appointed time of death is an impenetrable fortress.
22. Death cuts hopes short.
23. Death exposes hope.
24. Death is the reaper of hope.
25. When death comes, hopes are exposed.
26. When you reach the end of your hopes, then remember the suddenness of death.
27. The bane of aspirations is the coming of death.
28. The bane of hope is death.
29. Your death will [soon] come to you, so be moderate in what you seek.
30. Anticipate death, for verily the hopes of people are on the verge of being cut short as death comes upon them.
31. Anticipate death and do good deeds; [by this] you will attain felicity through your [hastening to good deeds while you have] respite.
32. Every moment you come closer to death, so improve your deeds.
33. For every appointed time there is an arrival.
34. For every person there is a day that he shall not go beyond.
35. For everyone there is a driver who drives him towards his death.
36. If the appointed times of death were to become known, the [secret] hopes [of people] would be exposed.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

37. If you were to see death and its approach, you would surely hate [false] aspiration and its deception.
38. If you were to think about the closeness of death and its [imminent] arrival, the sweetness of life and its comfort would become bitter for you.
39. Whoever is mindful of his [eventual] death reduces his aspirations.
40. Whoever regards his stay [in this world] as short and temporary, his hope and aspiration gets diminished.
41. One who rides with the reins of his aspiration stumbles over his death.
42. How close hope is to death!
43. How severing death is for hope!
44. He who counts tomorrow [to be] from his lifetime has not given death its rightful place.
45. What an excellent cure death is!
46. Each breath of a person is a step closer to his death.
47. No shield is more protective than the appointed time of death.
48. Nothing is truer than death.
49. You are the harvests of the appointed terms and the targets of death.
50. May the mercy of Allah be on the person who understands that his [every] breath brings him a step closer to his death, so he hastens to [do] good deeds and shortens his hopes.
51. May the mercy of Allah be on the person who anticipates [his] death, belies [his false] aspirations, and makes his actions sincere.
52. Sometimes death is [hidden] beneath an aspiration.
53. With the passing of hours, lifetimes perish.
54. Verily there is a shield over me, in the form of my appointed time of death, which protects me; so when my day comes, it relieves itself of me and surrenders me [to death]. At this time the arrow will not miss its target and the wound will not heal.

7. THE HEREAFTER

1. The Hereafter is the victory of the felicitous.
2. Occupying yourself with improving your Hereafter will save you from the chastisement of hellfire.
3. The [true] winner is one who has sold this transitory life for the [eternal] Hereafter.
4. Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world whereas good deeds are the tillage of the Hereafter.
5. The conditions in this world are based on convention whereas the conditions in the Hereafter are based on merit.
6. Surely in front of you is a difficult place of ascension in which one whose weight is lighter is in a better position than the one whose weight is heavier, and the one who moves slowly is worse off than the one who moves swiftly. Verily its landing will lead you to either Paradise or hell.
7. Verily the final destination is al-Qiyāmah and this is enough of an admonition for the one who reasons, and [enough of] a warning for the one who is unaware; and after that - what you know of the torment of the Day of Judgment and the frightening terror, and the deafening of the ears, and the turning of the ribs, and the narrowness of the grave, and the intensity of sadness and heavy-heartedness.
8. If you desire success and honor in the Hereafter, then take from the perishing [life of this world] for the everlasting [life of the Hereafter].
9. Verily you are following the path of those who came before you, so put your efforts in [working for] your Hereafter and do not care for worldly gain.
10. Verily you have been created for the Hereafter, so work for it!
11. If you work for the Hereafter, your arrow hits the mark.
12. Verily you are all proceeding towards the Hereafter and will be presented before Allah.
13. The sweetness of the Hereafter removes the pangs of misery of this world.
14. Attain the Hereafter by abandoning this world, and don't [try to] acquire [the embellishments of] this world by abandoning the faith.
15. The Hereafter is everlasting.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

16. Blessed is he who remembers the Hereafter and thus does good.
17. The seeker of the Hereafter finds in it what he hopes for, whereas in this world [only] that which is predestined for him comes to him.
18. You must strive and struggle for the betterment of the Hereafter.
19. I wonder at the one who denies the second genesis while he sees the first genesis.
20. The goal of the Hereafter is everlasting [life].
21. In the Hereafter there is accounting without action.
22. Be from the children of the Hereafter and do not be from the children of this world, for surely every child will join his mother on the Day of Reckoning.
23. One who works for the Hereafter will be triumphant.
24. One who develops his Hereafter achieves his aspirations.
25. One who buys his Hereafter with his worldly life, gains both of them.
26. One who builds the abode of his permanent dwelling is truly wise.
27. One who is certain about the Hereafter turns away from this world.
28. One who improves his Hereafter will be triumphant.
29. One who is certain about the Hereafter does not covet this world.
30. One who is desirous of the Hereafter [and works for it] attains it.
31. Everything in the Hereafter has perpetuity and everlastingness.
32. There is no substitute for the Hereafter; and this world is not the price of one's soul.
33. He who does not concern himself with improving his Hereafter is not a [true] believer.
34. One who longs for the bounties of the Hereafter is content with little in this world.
35. Who is more at a loss than the one who trades his Hereafter for this world?!
36. One who puts all his efforts for [the betterment of] his Hereafter succeeds in attaining what he looks forward to.
37. Whoever strives for his permanent abode, his action becomes sincere and his fear [of displeasing Allah] increases.
38. One who is certain about his Hereafter thinks no more of this world.
39. Whoever increases his remembrance of the Hereafter, his transgression reduces.
40. One who strives to improve his Hereafter, Allah will improve for him his worldly life.
41. One whose efforts are for the Hereafter will attain the best of his aspired goals.
42. One who does not work for the Hereafter will not attain what he hopes for.
43. One who has three [qualities] will have saved his life in this world and the Hereafter: he commands good and himself follows it, forbids evil and himself keeps away from it, and is careful in following the commandments of Allah, the Mighty and High.
44. How great a loser is the one for whom there is no share in the Hereafter!
45. The bitterness of this world is the sweetness of the Hereafter.
46. The deceived one who succeeds in attaining the smallest portion of this world [through his greatest effort] is not comparable to the one who succeeds in attaining [the smallest portion of] the Hereafter by exerting his greatest effort.
47. He who works for his Eternal Abode obtains what he desires.
48. Do not sell the Hereafter for this world and do not exchange the everlasting for the evanescent.
49. Never let anything occupy you from working for the Hereafter for indeed the time is short.
50. The Hereafter and this world do not come together.
51. The perishing and the permanent do not go together.
52. No one attains what he wishes for in the Hereafter except by abstaining from that which he desires in this world.
53. It behoves one who is certain about the everlastingness and permanence of the Hereafter to work for it.
54. People do not abstain from anything of their worldly life for the sake of improving their Hereafter but that Allah, the Glorified, recompenses them with what is better than it.
55. Aspire for what Allah has promised the God-wary, for surely the truest promises are His promises.
56. Verily tomorrow is close to today. This day will pass with what is in it and tomorrow will come [soon] following it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

57. The [final] destination is in front of you and time is behind you, pushing you [forward].
58. Verily you have an ultimate destination so move towards your destination, and you have a guide so move towards it with [the help of] your guide.
59. A man may be happy to gain what he was not meant to lose, and [he may be] saddened to lose what he was not meant to gain; so let your happiness be in that which you have acquired for your Hereafter and let your sadness be in that which you have lost from it; and let your concern be for that which comes after death.
60. Let your concern be for your Hereafter and your sorrow be for your soul - for how many of the sorrowful have been led to everlasting bliss by their sorrow, and how many of the distressed have attained their aspiration.
61. Prepare yourselves for the day when the eyes will be glazed, and the minds will lose their sanity because of its horror, and the perceptions will become dull.
62. Beware of the day when the deeds are audited, when earthquakes increase and when young children turn old.
63. Be careful not to be swindled out of the Permanent Abode, the dwelling of the righteous and the virtuous elite, about whose qualities the Qur'an has spoken and whose dwellers it has praised; while Allah, the Glorified, has guided you and invited you to it.
64. Is there nobody who has prepared the provisions for his Hereafter before the coming of [the hour of] his departure?
65. The Hereafter is the abode of your permanent stay, so prepare for it that which will be lasting for you.
66. Place your concern and effort for your Hereafter.
67. Be concerned about your Hereafter and you will become upright.
68. Exert all your effort for your afterlife and your [final] station will be improved, and do not sell your Hereafter for your worldly life.
69. Work hard in preparing the answers for the Day of Questioning and Reckoning.
70. Those who have the greatest share of the Hereafter are those who have the smallest share of this world.
71. I enjoin you to be well prepared and increase your provisions for the day when you will meet with what you have sent forth and regret what you have left behind, and will be rewarded for what you had forwarded [in advance].
72. When you turn away from the transitory world and become occupied with the permanent abode, then your arrow has indeed hit its mark, the doors of prosperity are opened for you and you have attained success.
73. The reward of the Hereafter makes one forget the hardships of this world.
74. Take from what will not last for you and what you will not last for [of this world] for that which you will not separate from and which will not separate from you [of the Hereafter].
75. Partake in the best of actions and befriend the best of friends; for verily every person will get that which he has earned and will be with the one whom he loves in the Hereafter.
76. The Everlasting Abode [of Paradise] is the home of the veracious and the dwelling of the virtuous and righteous.
77. Remembrance of the Hereafter is a cure and a remedy.
78. May Allah have mercy on the person who takes from [his] life for [his] death, from the transitory for the everlasting and from the perishing for the permanent.
79. Seek the Hereafter and the world will come to you belittled.
80. Everything in the Hereafter is greater when seen than when heard of, so be satisfied with what you hear [of it] without seeing [it] and what you learn of [it] without witnessing [it].
81. How can one who is occupied with this world work for the Hereafter?
82. Verily you are in greater need of developing the permanent abode [of the Hereafter] than you are of building the temporary abode [of this world].
83. Verily you have been created for the Hereafter, not for this world, and for perpetuity, not for extinction.
84. Verily you have been created for perpetuity, not for extinction; and you are most certainly in a temporary abode of subsistence and a place which is not suitable for settling.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

85. The betterment of the Hereafter is in the rejection of this world.
86. I am amazed at the one who knows his Lord, how can he not strive for the everlasting abode?
87. One who is certain about the everlasting is uninterested in that which perishes.
88. One who loves the everlasting abode becomes oblivious to [worldly] pleasures.
89. One who hopes to attain the bountiful rewards [of the Hereafter] will not have his hopes disappointed.
90. Would you be happy to meet Allah tomorrow on the Day of Resurrection while He is pleased with you and not angry? Then be indifferent to [the pleasures of] this world and desirous of the Hereafter. And adopt God-wariness and honesty, for these are the consolidators of faith. And accompany the people of truth and emulate their actions - you will become one of them.
91. He whose goal is [attaining] this world will not be successful in [attaining] the Hereafter.
92. The fortunate one who becomes prosperous in the permanent abode by attaining his desires is not like the deceived one who loses the bounties [of the Hereafter] because of his bad choices and wretchedness.
93. Do not be one of those who hopes for the Hereafter without working [for it], and postpones repentance with long hopes; one who speaks in this world with the words of those who are indifferent [to its pleasures] but acts in it with the actions of the desirous.
94. None will be rewarded with the bounties of the Hereafter except those who are patient in the face of the tribulations of this world.
95. There is no benefit in working for the Hereafter while having desire for this world.
96. No one will attain an elevated rank in the Hereafter except through sincerity in action, reducing hopes and espousing God-wariness.
97. Become deserving of what Allah has prepared for you [in the Hereafter] by seeking the fulfillment of His true promise and being wary of the horror of His reckoning.

8. THE BROTHER, THE FRIEND, THE ASSOCIATE AND THE COMPANION

1. Brothers are the best of assets [in times of hardship].
2. The one who assists [you] in obeying [Allah] is the best companion.
3. A Friend is one whose friendship is true [even] in absence.
4. The loss that causes illness (or burns [the heart]) is the loss of loved ones.
5. A companion is like a patch [of cloth], so take one that matches [yours].
6. An associate is like a friend, so choose one who is suitable.
7. A stranger is one who does not have a [close] friend.
8. Brothers in faith have lasting affection [for each other].
9. The brother whom you benefit from is better than the brother [for] whom you increase [benefit].
10. Seeking the destruction of a friend stems from lack of conciliation.
11. Brothers are an embellishment in times of ease and a [means of] support in times of tribulation.
12. Worldly brothers are such that their affection is cut off as quickly as its causes are severed.
13. The best of your brothers is he who supports you with his benevolence, and better than him is one who makes you needless of all other than him.
14. The best of brothers are the most sincere [of them] and the worst of them are the most Deceitful.
15. The best brother is one whose brotherhood is not based on worldly gain.
16. The best brother is one whose affection is for the sake of Allah.
17. The best brother is one after whose loss you would not like to remain [alive].
18. The best of your brothers is one who rushes towards good and pulls you towards it, and enjoins you to righteousness and assists you in it.
19. The best of your brothers is the one who exhorts you to speak the truth by his own veracity and compels you to perform the best deeds by his own good actions.
20. The best of your brothers is the one who shows you the path of guidance, makes you acquire piety and prevents you from following your lowly desires.
21. The best of your brothers is the one who assists you financially [in your time of need].
22. Many a brother has not been born to your mother.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

23. The friend of an ignorant person is troubled and afflicted.
24. Accompany your brothers with kindness and cover their offences with forgiveness.
25. Accompany the intelligent and you will benefit, turn away from this world and you will be safe.
26. Accompany the intelligent, associate with the learned and overcome your vain desires, [by this] you will join the company of the Exalted Assembly.
27. Accompany the wise, associate with the forbearing and turn away from this world - you shall dwell in the Garden of the Abode.
28. Association with the wicked leads one to become evil, just like the wind - when it passes by a foul smell, it carries the stench.
29. Accompanying a fool is torment for the soul.
30. Accompanying a wise friend enlivens the soul.
31. The friend of a fool is in distress.
32. The friend of an ignorant person is exposed to harm.
33. Your friend is one who forbids you [from evil] and your enemy is one who entices you [to Perform evil].
34. Association with the wicked leads one to have negative thoughts about the righteous.
35. You should accompany the one who is intelligent and devout, for surely he is the best of companions.
36. You should keep ties with brethren of purity, for they are an embellishment in times of ease and a support in [times of] tribulation.
37. You should build a bond of brotherhood with the one who cautions and forbids you [from doing evil] for verily he is aiding and guiding you.
38. One who is amiable towards people is loved by them.
39. The companionship [in this world] is short.
40. A friend is the closest of relations.
41. The friend has been named ṣādiq because he is truthful to you about your nature and faults, so have confidence in one who does this for he is your [true] friend.
42. The comrade has been named rafīq because he encourages you to improve your religion; so whoever assists you to improve your faith, then he is a concerned comrade.
43. As the companionship prolongs, the [mutual] respect is affirmed.
44. If you like to remain safe, then keep away from the companionship of a foolish person.
45. When the sins of a friend increase, the joy of being with him decreases.
46. When your friend takes you as a brother, then be like a servant to him and accord him with true loyalty and perfect sincerity.
47. When the disloyalty of a friend becomes evident, forsaking him becomes easy.
48. Through mutual understanding, companionship lasts.
49. Through good companionship, camaraderie increases.
50. The worst friend is the one who is [easily] fed up.
51. How bad a colleague the ignoramus is!
52. How evil a colleague the enemy is!
53. How evil a comrade the envious one is!
54. Hold on to every friend who is brought close to you by hard times (and who benefits you in times of distress).
55. Be warm-hearted to your friend and he will be warm-hearted towards you, honour him and he will honour you, give him preference over yourself and he will give you preference over himself and his family.
56. A good companion is a blessing.
57. An evil companion is a curse.
58. Sit in the company of the people of piety and wisdom and increase your discourse with them, for if you are ignorant they will enlighten you and if you are knowledgeable, you will increase your knowledge.
59. Good companionship increases the affection of the hearts.
60. The jealousy of a friend is an ailment of [his] friendship.
61. The best choice is accompanying the righteous.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

62. The best of those whom you can accompany are the people of knowledge and insight.
63. The best person you can accompany is the one who does not compel you to seek adjudication between yourself and him.
64. The best companion is one who makes you infatuated with the Hereafter, urges you to renounce worldly pleasures and assists you in obeying your Lord.
65. A man's friend is a sign of his intelligence and his speech is evidence of his merit.
66. The best of all things is that which is newer, but the best of brothers is the oldest of them.
67. The best brother is the most helpful of them in [performing] good deeds, the most active in doing good deeds and the most affable in companionship.
68. Many a friend may be envious.
69. Many a friend is scorned because of his ignorance, not because of his intention.
70. The beauty of companionship is tolerance.
71. The worst of your brothers is the one who makes you accept falsehood.
72. The worst of your brothers is the one who forces you to compromise and compels you to ask for pardon.
73. The worst of your friends is the one for whom you [always] have to undergo hardship.
74. The worst of brothers is one who forsakes you [in times of need].
75. The worst companion is an ignorant person.
76. The worst brother is the one who keeps ties with you in good times but abandons you in times of difficulty.
77. The worst of your brothers is the one who beguiles you with vain desire and distracts you with this world.
78. The worst of your brothers is the one who flatters you and hides your faults from you.
79. The worst of your brothers is the deceiving flatterer.
80. The worst of your brothers is the one who is slow in performing good deeds and slows you down [from doing good] along with him.
81. The worst and most deceitful of your brothers is the one who entices you with [the pleasures of] this transitory world and makes you unmindful of the Hereafter.
82. The worst companion is the one who changes [his loyalty] quickly.
83. The worst comrade is the one who is very suspicious.
84. The worst affinity is [one that leads to] putting someone into trouble.
85. The condition of companionship is lack of disagreement.
86. A bad companion is [like] a splinter of hellfire.
87. Companionship with the righteous leads one to acquire righteousness just like the wind - when it passes by perfume, it carries the fragrance.
88. Enmity with the honourable is safer than friendship with the wicked.
89. The companionship of a wise person is dependable.
90. Sitting in the company of the virtuous brings honour.
91. Accompanying the wicked brings ruin.
92. Sitting with people of low morals wears out the hearts.
93. Holding back your kindness invites [your companions] to accompany someone other than you.
94. Being in the company of an ignorant person is one of the greatest tribulations.
95. Sitting with the common people corrupts one's habits.
96. One who accompanies the wicked is like one who travels by sea, if he is saved from drowning he will still not be saved from the fear [of drowning].
97. Sitting with worldly people causes one to forget his faith and drives [one] towards the obedience of Satan.
98. Agreement with companions prolongs the companionship; and showing courtesy in matters makes the means [of accomplishment] easy.
99. Sitting in the company of wise men enlivens the minds and cures the souls.
100. The loneliness of a man is better for him than [having] an evil comrade.
101. By establishing ties for the sake of Allah, brotherhood becomes fruitful.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

102. Brotherhood for the sake of Allah is based on advising each other for the sake of Allah, contributing for His sake, helping each other to obey His commands, forbidding each other from disobeying Him, assisting each other for His sake and sincere affection.
103. Pretend to have forgotten the bad actions of your brothers and their affection [towards you] will last longer.
104. The fruit of brotherhood is [in] protecting [the reputation of one's brother in] his absence and presenting his faults to him [so that he may correct himself].
105. One who fraternizes for the sake of Allah, Gains.
106. One who fraternizes for the sake of this world is deprived [of it].
107. One who has no brothers has no kin.
108. One who [always] argues with his brothers has few friends.
109. He who loses the one who was his brother for the sake of Allah, it is as if he has lost the most important organ of his body.
110. One who preserves [that which is entrusted to him] and is loyal will not be deprived of the benefit of brotherhood.
111. It is from weak personal judgment to break ties with one's brothers.
112. How numerous are friends during times of prosperity and how few they are during the difficult times!
113. No community has established brotherhood for other than seeking the pleasure of Allah, the Glorified, but that their brotherhood will be counted as a sin against them on the day when the deeds are presented to Allah, the Glorified.
114. Death of a brother is like having wings clipped and hands cut.
115. The order of humanity is based on righteous brotherhood and the order of religion is based on unshakable certainty.
116. Do not sever ties with your brother because of some doubt that you have, and do not abandon him after he has sought [your] pardon.
117. Do not neglect the rights of your brother out of confidence in your close relationship with him, for he whose rights you neglect is not your brother.
118. Do not take as a brother one who hides your positive traits and exposes your shortcomings.
119. Do not seek brotherhood [and friendship] among the uncouth people, rather seek it among the trustworthy and loyal people.
120. There is no good in the one who abandons his brother without [him committing] any offence.
121. There is no good in the brother who does not enjoin on you what he enjoins on himself.
122. The brotherhood of the righteous is to be considered beneficial whereas association with the wicked and sinful is to be avoided.
123. Be careful not to accept the words of a liar, for he will bring close to you that which is far and take far away from you that which is close.
124. Be careful not to drive away your friend in a way that removes all the affection he has for you, and leave some room from your friendship for him so that he may rely on returning back to it.
125. Be careful not to alienate the one who has affection for you in such a manner that he opts to distance himself and prefers to separate himself from you.
126. Be careful not to associate with the one who makes you negligent and deceives you, for he will surely forsake you and destroy you.
127. Be careful not to associate with the sinners, for verily one who is pleased with the actions of a group is like one of them.
128. Be careful not to befriend a wicked person, for he would surely sell his friendship for the most worthless of things.
129. It is better and more appropriate to associate with people of wisdom and intelligence.
130. The best habits are honouring one's companion and assisting one who seeks help.
131. The noblest of traits is guarding one's friendship and the best of endeavours is fulfilling one's promise.
132. Whoever invites you to the Eternal Abode and assists you to work for it, then he is the true, caring friend.
133. The friend in one's worldly life is like the friend in his faith.
134. Inquire about the companion [on the journey] before the route.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

135. The true friend will not turn away from his friendship even if he is treated harshly.
136. Bring yourself to build ties with your brother when he cuts you off, and to be kind and seek closeness [to him] when he turns away from you, and to be near to him when he distances himself from you, and to assume that he has an excuse when he does something wrong to you - to the extent that you are like his servant, and as if he has done some great favor upon you. Beware however, not to do this where it is not befitting or with someone who is not worthy of it.
137. Be sincere in giving your brother advice whether [he finds it] courteous or offensive.
138. Bring yourself to be polite to your brother when he is harsh to you, and to build ties [with him] when he cuts you off, and to be generous [with him] when he is niggardly, and tolerate what he does and keep relations with him.
139. Choose the new of everything but the oldest one from among your brothers.
140. Avoid the company of a liar, but if you are forced to be in his company then do not accept his words as true, and do not let him know that you belie him, for he will readily turn away from your friendship rather than abandoning his habit [of lying].
141. Spare no effort in showing affection to your friend, but do not put your entire trust in him; give him all your support, but do not disclose all your secrets to him.
142. The loss of one's brothers weakens one's fortitude.
143. He whom you need to indulge is not your [true] brother.
144. He who forces his companion to argue with him is not a comrade with praiseworthy traits.
145. He who makes it necessary for you to get a judge to adjudicate between yourself and him is not your brother.
146. The embellishment of brotherhood is good companionship and [giving] support despite [financial] difficulty.
147. Good brotherhood increases reward and beautifies praise.
148. The best of brothers are the least hypocritical in giving good advice.
149. The best of brothers is the one who makes it unnecessary for his brother to seek from anyone other than him.
150. The best of your brothers is the one who is stern with you regarding obedience to Allah.
151. The best of your brothers is the one who supports you, and better than him is the one who suffices for you, and when he needs you, he excuses you [if you are unable to assist him].
152. The best of brothers is one who does not scrutinize his brothers.
153. The best of your brothers is the one whose anger at you increases in matters pertaining to the truth.
154. A friend is the better of the two resources.
155. A friend is the better of the two assets.
156. A friend is a better asset and is more lasting in fondness.
157. A friend is a person who is 'you' except that he is other than you.
158. The truthful friend is one who advises you of your faults protects your dignity in your absence and gives you preference over himself.
159. The wise person is one who selects his friend carefully, for a man is gauged by his friend.
160. Friends are one soul in different bodies.
161. The [true] friend is he who forbids [one from] injustice and wrongdoing while helping [one] to perform good deeds and be righteous.
162. Keep the company of one whom you find cannot do without you, and if you do something bad to him he responds with good, as if he was the one at fault.
163. One who has no brother (or brotherhood) has no goodness in him.
164. One who turns away from his brothers because of every [small] misdeed will have few friends.
165. One who spoils [his relationship with] his friend has reduced his own number.
166. One who accompanies evildoers will not be safe [from them].
167. Whoever is concerned about you, then he is your [true] friend.
168. One whose company is good will have many companions.
169. One who sits in the company of the ignorant should be prepared for fruitless talk and gossip.
170. One who does not attend to the needs of the one who shows friendship towards him has lost a friend.
171. One who demands too much from his friend will sever his friendship.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

172. One who takes his [relationship with his] allies lightly will find the overrunning of his enemies to be heavy.
173. It is through brotherhood for the sake of Allah that love becomes sincere.
174. It is in times of tribulation that the protection of brethren is put to test.
175. It is when power is lost that friend is distinguished from foe.
176. I am amazed at the one who seeks more companions why does he not accompany the wise, pious scholars from whose character he can benefit and from whose knowledge he can get guidance and whose company is an embellishment for him!
177. In every companionship there is choice.
178. In times of difficulty one comes to know who his [true] friend is.
179. It is in times of [financial] difficulty that the value of a friend's generosity becomes apparent.
180. Good companionship is something friends wish for.
181. Be careful not to become negligent of your brother's right [over you] while counting on your right over him, for indeed your brother has the same right over you that you have over him.
182. Be careful not to ignore the right of your brother while relying on the bond between you and him, for he whose right you overlook is not your brother.
183. The best assets are reliable brothers.
184. The best of assets are a loyal brother and a righteous sibling.
185. The brother whose friendship is strongest is one who is most supportive of his brother [both] in times of ease and difficulty.
186. The one who journeys in search of a righteous brother journeys the farthest.
187. Your true brother is one who forgives your mistake, fulfils your need, accepts your excuse, hides your [hidden] flaw, removes your apprehension and actualizes your hope.
188. Do not accompany the one who has lost his mind and do not seek good from one who is betrayed by his roots, for the one who is insane will harm you while he thinks he is helping you and the one who does not have [virtuous] roots will do evil to the one who does good to him.
189. Do not accompany anyone but the intelligent and pious; and do not associate with anyone but the knowledgeable and righteous; and do not mention your secret to anyone but the trustworthy and loyal.
190. Do not accompany one who recalls your misdeeds and forgets your virtues and merits.
191. The companionship of the unintelligent is not enjoyable.
192. None accompany the virtuous except those who are like them.
193. Those who sit in the company of the wicked are not safe from the calamities of tribulation.
194. Brothers are eliminators of grief and sorrow.
195. Obey your brother even if he disobeys you, and establish ties with him even if he shuns you.
196. Keep yourself in the company of a virtuous and pious brother and you will remain safe, seek advice from him and you will benefit.
197. Love for the sake of Allah the one who struggles against you for the betterment of [your] religion and covers you with the mantle of certitude.
198. Be courteous to your brothers and don't expose them to the harshness of your tongue; and let your goodness flow forth for them.
199. Offer your advice to your friend, your assistance to your acquaintance, and to all the people, your cheerfulness.
200. Be cautious of the company of one whose opinion is accepted but whose actions are evil, for surely a person is judged by the company he keeps.
201. Be careful not to associate with an evil colleague, for his association will destroy you and his companionship will ruin you.
202. Do not give preference to an ignoble person over a noble one.
203. Never associate with one who has no intelligence.
204. Do not associate with a fool, for he will embellish his actions for you and want you to become like him.
205. Do not associate with those who love this world, for if you have less they will disregard you and if you have more they will envy you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

206. Do not frequent the company of a wicked person, for if you are bestowed with a blessing, he will envy you and if a misfortune befalls you, he will abandon you.
207. Do not acquire more 'worldly' brothers, for if you become incapable of fulfilling their wishes they turn into enemies; and their example is like the example of fire - a lot of it burns and a little of it benefits.
208. Take comfort for yourself in solitude rather than bad company.
209. Be more confident of your intelligent foe than your ignorant friend.
210. Whenever the companionship prolongs, the [mutual] respect is affirmed.
211. For everything there is a bane and the bane of a good person is bad company.
212. For everything there is a vexation and the vexation of your lifetime is [being in] the company of an enemy.
213. One who mingles with the wicked is not intelligent.
214. There is nothing that brings one closer to good and keeps one safer from evil than keeping company with the righteous.
215. One who accompanies the wise is respected.
216. Be careful not to accompany the immoral, the wretched, and those who openly disobey the commandments of Allah.
217. Be just as wary of sitting in the company of the ignorant, as you would be at ease in the company of the intelligent.
218. Be careful not to remain in the company of the immoral, for surely evil clings to evil.
219. Be careful not to be cheated by your friend or to be overcome by your foe.
220. Be careful not to befriend a fool, for he will harm you while trying to benefit you.
221. Be careful not to befriend a miser, for he will hold back [from assisting you] when you are most in need of him.
222. Be careful not to accompany the wicked, for they consider it a favour upon you to keep you safe from themselves.
223. Your brother is your supporter in times of difficulty.
224. If you want to cut off ties with your brother [in faith] then leave some of your friendship for him, so that he may return to it someday if he so wishes.
225. Before choosing a friend, assess him and try hard to find out about him, otherwise you will be forced by necessity to associate with the wicked.
226. Accompanying a person [for some time] is sufficient to evaluate him.
227. [Even] if you have gained confidence and trust in your close friend, safeguard some of your affairs and conceal some of your secrets [from him], for it is possible that you may regret [revealing them] at some time [in the future].
228. As the bond of brotherhood strengthens, compliments become distasteful.
229. When you [decide to] establish the bond of brotherhood, then honour the right of brotherhood.
230. If you are certain of the affection of your brother then don't be concerned [about what transpires] when you meet him or he meets you.
231. One who takes a brother after successfully evaluating him, his companionship will last longer and his bond will be more firmly established.
232. One who does not investigate before he takes a brother will be misled to association with the depraved.
233. One who takes a brother without evaluation will be forced by necessity to associate with the wicked.
234. The amity between those who are brothers for the sake of Allah endures because of its firm foundation.
235. True brotherhood is an embellishment in times of ease and a provision in times of difficulty.
236. The brother acquired for the sake of Allah is the nearest of relations - even closer than mothers and fathers.
237. Your brother for the sake of Allah is one who guides you towards rectitude, forbids you from corruption and assists you to improve your Hereafter.
238. Your true friend and brother is the one who protects you with his life, and prefers you over his wealth, his children and his spouse.
239. It is only a few of the brothers who are fair.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

240. An evil companion is the worst of companions; and the disease of ignobility is a concealed disease.
241. Accompany the virtuous and you will become one of them; separate yourself from the evil people and you will be dissociated from them.
242. Be sure to investigate before taking anyone as your brother, for assessment is the gauge that distinguishes the virtuous from the wicked.
243. One who is courteous to his companion will gain his acceptance, and one who is harsh to him will drive him away and get separated from him.
244. One who is not pleased with his friend except when he prefers him over himself, will always be resentful.
245. One whose companionship is for the sake of Allah, his companionship is honourable and his friendship is upright.
246. 246. Be careful of the one whose friendship is not for the sake of Allah, for his friendship is wicked and his company is doomed.
247. One who does not assist you by [his] accompanying you, then his company is [actually] a burden on you, if [only] you knew.
248. One who does not overlook the mistakes of his friend will die lonely.
249. One who seeks a truly loyal friend, seeks that which cannot be found.
250. Do not accompany the one who lacks determination.
251. One whose friendship does not benefit you, his enmity will harm you.
252. Do not excuse one who is insincere in his friendship with you.
253. One of the conditions of faith is [having] good companionship with one's brothers.
254. Associating with the ignorant stems from lack of intelligence.
255. Never take your friend's enemy as your friend, thereby making an enemy out of your friend.
256. There is no life for one who is separated from those whom he loves.
257. There is no good in a stingy (or suspicious) friend.
258. A friend is not truly a friend unless he protects his brother in his absence, his misfortune and his death.
259. Do not break off ties with a friend, even if he is ungrateful.
260. Do not trust in a friend before testing him.
261. Do not count one who does not support [you] with his wealth as a friend.
262. Do not rely on your friend until you have tested him, and be extremely cautious of your enemy.
263. One who keeps good ties [and company] with his brothers makes their bond [with him] last longer.
264. One who points out your faults to you and defends you in your absence, then he is your true friend, so protect him.
265. One who has no friend has no provision.
266. One who calls you towards the Eternal Abode and assists you to work for it, then he is indeed a caring friend.
267. One of the bad choices [that a person can make] is accompanying the wicked.
268. Nothing establishes the boundaries of respect like companionship and neighbourhood.

9. GOOD ETIQUETTE

1. Good etiquette is one of the two distinguishing merits.
2. Good etiquette in a person is like a tree whose roots are the intellect.
3. The noblest of personal merits is good etiquette.
4. The best etiquette is preserving one's magnanimity.
5. The best etiquette is that [in] which you start with yourself.
6. The best etiquette is for a person to stay within his limits and not go beyond his rank.
7. The best of etiquettes is that which stops you from what is forbidden.
8. The noblest merit is good etiquette.
9. The people of intellect are in need of good etiquette just as the plants thirst for rain.
10. People are more in need of good etiquette than of silver and gold.
11. Good etiquette is the best merit.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

12. Etiquettes are renewed vestments.
13. Good etiquette is the best trait.
14. Etiquette is a reflection of the intellect.
15. Good etiquette is the perfection of man.
16. You are gauged by your etiquette so beautify it with forbearance.
17. Indeed you are more in need of acquiring good etiquette than you are of acquiring silver and gold.
18. Through good etiquette brainpower is sharpened.
19. The worst attribute is bad etiquette.
20. The fruit of good etiquette is good character.
21. Good etiquette covers up bad lineage.
22. Good etiquette is the best supporter and finest companion.
23. Good etiquette is the best attribute and noblest means.
24. The value of good etiquette is nobler than the value of lineage.
25. The best thing that parents can bequeath to their children is good etiquette.
26. The means of purifying [one's] character is good etiquette.
27. The seeker of good etiquette is wiser than the seeker of gold.
28. Seeking [good] etiquette is the embellishment of [one's] honourable lineage.
29. Adopt good etiquette for it is the embellishment of honourable lineage.
30. A little good etiquette is better than many noble ancestors.
31. Everything requires intellect and intellect requires etiquette.
32. Every distinction is limited except intelligence and good etiquette.
33. In order to discipline yourself, it is enough that you keep away from [doing] that which you hate from others.
34. Good etiquette will not be effective until it is accompanied with intellect.
35. One whose etiquette decreases, his vices increase.
36. One who is abased because of his poor etiquette will not be elevated by his noble lineage.
37. One whose etiquette is bad, his honourable lineage gets tarnished.
38. One who is lowered by his lineage is elevated by his good etiquette.
39. One who is held back by his lack of etiquette will not be pushed forward by the weight of his honourable lineage.
40. Whoever is keen about [acquiring] good etiquette, his vices will decrease.
41. One who is infatuated with [good] etiquette has adorned himself.
42. One whose etiquette augments his intellect is like a [lone] shepherd among many sheep.
43. One whose etiquette is not his best quality, his simplest condition will be his destruction.
44. One who is not reformed by the discipline of Allah cannot become reformed through self-discipline.
45. The best companion of the intellect is etiquette.
46. The best attribute is good etiquette.
47. There is no merit like good etiquette.
48. There is no adornment like good etiquette.
49. There is no heritage like etiquette.
50. There is no vestment like good etiquette.
51. There is no honour with bad etiquette.
52. One who has a dirty tongue has no etiquette.
53. There is no rank higher than good etiquette.
54. He who has no etiquette has no intelligence.
55. He who lacks good etiquette and inclines towards idle play does not become a leader.
56. There are three things which one always needs to seek more of: Good etiquette, avoidance of suspicion, and abstinence from all that is forbidden.

10. HARM AND PREVENTING HARM

1. Harm breeds hatred.
2. One who prevents himself from harming [others] will not be opposed [or hated] by anyone.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Preventing yourself from harming [others] reforms the hearts of your enemies towards you.

11. EATING

1. Eating less is from self-restraint and overeating is from indulgence.
2. Eating less prevents many maladies of the body.
3. How often has [the eating of] one food prevented [the eating of] other foods.
4. Overeating is from gluttony, and gluttony is the worst flaw.
5. Overeating and oversleeping corrupt the soul and bring about impairment.
6. Overeating causes bad [body] odour.
7. Be like the bee when it eats it eats what is good and when it secretes it secretes what is good, and when it sits on a twig it does not break it.
8. Whoever eats less, his thoughts become pure.
9. One who restricts his eating, his health improves and his thoughts become righteous.
10. One whose efforts are [solely] for [acquiring] that which enters his stomach, his value is [equal to] that which comes out from it.
11. One who eats excessively, his health deteriorates and his expenses become heavy for him to bear.

12. ALLAH AND HIS ATTRIBUTES

1. The knowledge of Allah, the Glorified, tore through the veils of the unseen and encompassed the darkness of inner-beliefs.
2. Everyone who is called 'one' other than Allah, the Glorified, is little; and every honoured one other than Him is inferior; and every strong one other than Him is weak; and every master other than Him is a slave; and every knower other than Him is a learner; and every capable one other than Him is sometimes able and other times unable.
3. Every hidden thing is apparent for Allah, exalted are His bounties.
4. Every secret is manifest for Allah.
5. Whoever contemplates about the essence of Allah, apostatizes.
6. Allah, the Glorified, does not misguide anyone and Allah is not unjust to the servants.
7. How great is the clemency of Allah, the Glorified, upon the recalcitrant, and how great is His forgiveness to the extravagant servants.
8. Allah, how great is that which we see of your creation, yet how small its greatness is next to what is hidden from us of your might!
9. Allah! How awesome is that which we witness of Your kingdom, yet how negligible is that compared to what is hidden from us of Your grand sovereignty!
10. He is Allah, the One for whom all signs of existence stand witness over the denying heart.
11. Allah, Great is His Majesty, is not perceived by the eyes through the sense of sight, rather He is perceived by the hearts through the realities of faith.
12. How can one whose guarantor is Allah, lose?
13. Allah, the Glorified, has not created anything in vain so that He may be entertained.
14. Allah, the Glorified, does not abandon anything to futility thereby rendering it void.
15. The knowledge of Allah, the Glorified, encompasses the concealed interiors and records the apparent exteriors.
16. Allah, the Glorified, has recorded your traces, known your actions and ordained your death.
17. Allah, the Glorified, did not create the creation on account of loneliness, nor did He command them [to obey Him] in order to gain anything.
18. Allah, the Glorified, has not created you in vain, and has not abandoned you to wander aimlessly, and He has not left you alone in misguidance and blindness.
19. How amazing the human being is! He sees through [a layer of] fat speaks with a piece of flesh, hears with a bone and breathes through a hole.
20. About the unity of Allah, the Exalted, he said: The depths of understanding cannot perceive Him and the heights of [intellectual] endeavors cannot reach Him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

21. Faces bow down in front of the greatness of Allah, hearts tremble out of fear of Him and souls are sacrificed for His pleasure.
22. Belief in the oneness of Allah enlivens the soul.
23. Belief that Allah is one means that you should not [try to] imagine [Him].
24. Whoever believes in one God is saved.
25. He ('a) said about the oneness of Allah: He is near everything but not attached, far from everything but not separate.
26. He ('a) said about the oneness of Allah, the Glorified: He is neither inside things nor outside them.
27. If your Lord had a partner, then his prophets would [also] have come to you.
28. One who believes in the oneness of Allah, the Glorified, does not compare Him to the creation.
29. He, the Glorified, was not perceived by the intellects and thus described, rather, He, the Exalted, described himself before the describers [attempted to describe Him].
30. Allah, the Glorified, did not give the intellect knowledge about the limits of His qualities, yet He did not prevent it from gaining the necessary understanding of Him.
31. He, the Glorified, can neither be confined in the intellect, thereby changing through the process of thought [or imagination], nor in the shackles of the mind, thereby becoming limited and the object of alteration.
32. Allah has not settled in anything so that it be said He exists therein, nor is He separated from anything so that it is said He is detached from it.
33. Whoever seeks permission from Allah, He grants it [to him].

13. MATTERS

1. Matters come to pass by divine decree, not by [the] planning [of human beings].
2. Deduce that which has not happened from that which has transpired, for matters are similar.
3. The most successful matters are those that have been shrouded in secrecy.
4. Indeed when matters are similar, the latter is judged by the former.
5. Matters are [perfected] through experience [and trial].
6. Matters are similar [to one another].
7. Matters are subservient to destiny until death (or injustice) enters the plan.
8. Seek in your work the course by which your excuse may be credible, your evidence may be established and your integrity may be restored.
9. The best matters are those which give rise to certitude.
10. The best matters are those which lead to deliverance [from hellfire].
11. The best matters are those which are free from cupidity.
12. The best matters are those that reveal the truth.
13. The best matters are those that are easy to initiate, end well and give praiseworthy results.
14. The best matters are those that give the quickest benefit and the most praiseworthy results.
15. Take of your matter that which makes your excuse credible and establishes your proof.
16. Sometimes matters look grim (or inescapable).
17. The worst matters are those that are the most dubious.
18. Blessed is he who is not unaware of the similarity between matters.
19. Sometimes matters become prevalent (or obscure).
20. One who suffers the severity of matters is destroyed.
21. One who suffers the severity of matters, perishes.
22. One who neglects his [own] affairs is negligent in all matters.
23. The gauge of [successful] matters is [in] their good endings.
24. One who does not safeguard his affairs is destroyed.
25. Do not embark on any matter until you have knowledge of it.
26. Make [matters] easy and not arduous; make [them] light and not strenuous.
27. Every matter has an outcome.
28. What has not [yet] happened can be deduced from what has transpired.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

29. Let the most beloved matters to you be the most universal in justice and the most equitable with [regards to the] rights [of others].
30. Be wary of every matter that degrades the one who performs it when it becomes apparent, and abases him.
31. Be wary of every matter that ruins the Hereafter and improves the worldly life.

14. ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL

1. Enjoining good and forbidding evil are the best actions of the creation.
2. Enjoin good and you will be among the virtuous. Forbid evil with your hand and tongue, and make an effort to disassociate yourself from the one who commits it.
3. Submit yourselves to good and enjoin it; keep away from evil and forbid it.
4. Verily enjoining good and forbidding evil neither brings death near nor decreases sustenance, rather it multiplies reward and magnifies recompense; and a just word in the presence of an oppressive ruler is [even] better than this.
5. Whoever observes excesses being committed and people being called towards evil, and disapproves of it with his heart, is safe and free [from responsibility for it], and whoever disapproves of it with his tongue will be rewarded for it, and he is in a higher position than the former. But whoever disapproves of it with his sword in order that the proof of Allah may remain superior and the word of the oppressors may remain inferior, has found the path of guidance and stands on the right way while his heart is illuminated with conviction.
6. If one of you sees an evil being committed and is unable to forbid it with his hand or tongue and forbids it with his heart, while Allah knows the truth of his intention, then [it is as if] he has forbidden it.
7. When [showing] respect is of no benefit then humiliation is firmer; when the whip is not successful then the sword is sharper.
8. He ('a) said regarding those who enjoin good and forbid evil: From among them there is one who disapproves of evil with his hand, tongue and heart. He is the one who has perfectly attained [all the] virtuous qualities. And among them there is one who disapproves of evil with his tongue and heart but not with his hand. He is the one who has attained only two virtuous qualities but lacks one. And among them there is the third one who disapproves of evil with his heart but not with his tongue and hand. He is the one who lacks the two better qualities out of three and possesses only one. Then, among them there is he who does not disapprove of evil with his tongue, heart or hand. He is just [like] a dead man among the living. All the virtuous deeds, including fighting in the way of Allah, when compared to the act of enjoining good and forbidding evil, are just like drops in the ocean. Enjoining good and forbidding evil does not bring death nearer, nor does it decrease sustenance. And better than all this is a just word in the presence of a tyrannical ruler.
9. Enjoining good [was prescribed] as a reformation for the common people, and forbidding evil as a restriction for the insolent.
10. Be one who invites towards good, dissuades from evil, builds ties with those who cut him off and gives to those who deprive him.
11. Be one who invites towards good, dissuades from evil, acts with virtue and prevents vice.
12. Be one who invites towards good while acting upon it, and don't be one who enjoins it while being distant from it [himself], thereby committing a sin and earning the displeasure of his Lord.
13. You will never be guided to good until you stray from evil.
14. One who enjoins good strengthens the backs of the believers.
15. One who forbids evil rubs the noses of the evildoers to the ground.
16. It is disgraceful for a man to dissuade the people from evil actions and forbid them from vices and sins, and then perform the same deeds when he is alone and not refrain from them.
17. Allah, the Glorified, has not commanded you to do anything but [that which is] good and has not forbidden you from anything but evil.
18. Allah, the Glorified, does not command anything except that He assists [the people] towards it.
19. Allah, the Glorified, does not forbid anything but that He has makes [the people] needless of it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

20. Verily I deem myself higher than that I should forbid people from that which I do not forbid myself, or enjoin them towards that which I have not preceded them in performing, or that I should be pleased with their actions which my Lord is not pleased with.

15. HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS

1. Many [of those] who hope get disappointed, and many a traveller fails to return.
2. Many a person hopes for what he never achieves.
3. Hope brings death closer and takes aspiration further away.
4. Hope is the dominion of devils over hearts of the negligent.
5. Hope is like a mirage, it deceives the one who sees it and disheartens the one who looks forward to it.
6. Hope is always in denial; and long life is an affliction for man.
7. Belie hope and do not trust it, for it is a deception and he who possesses it is deceived.
8. Belie your hopes and take advantage of your lifetimes to perform your best deeds, and hasten with the hastening of the wise and those endowed with understanding.
9. Be wary of the deceit of hopes, for many a person has hoped for a day that never came and built a house that he never occupied and amassed wealth that he never used, and it may be that he amassed it unlawfully by depriving others of their rights, thereby acquiring what is forbidden and carrying the burden of sin.
10. Be wary of vain hopes, as it is possible for one who starts a day not to end it and for one who is deemed fortunate at dusk to be mourned at dawn.
11. Be cautious of dashed hopes and seized blessings.
12. Beware of relying on [your] hopes, for this is the trait of fools.
13. The deception of hope corrupts [one's] action.
14. An ignorant person is fooled by the deception of his hope, so he loses the best of his actions.
15. The deception of hope wastes time and brings death closer.
16. In the deception of hopes, lifetimes lapse.
17. Aspirations may deceive.
18. Hopes may beguile.
19. Rarely do hopes turn out to be true.
20. Reduce your hopes, fear the suddenness of death and hasten towards performing good deeds.
21. Decrease your hopes and your actions will become sincere.
22. Reduce your hopes, for your death is indeed near!
23. Reduce [your] hopes, for verily life is short; and perform good actions, for verily little of it is plenty.
24. Reduce [your] hopes, hasten towards [good] deeds and fear the suddenness of death, as the return of lifetime cannot be hoped for like the return of livelihood. Whatever is missed from livelihood today may be hoped for tomorrow with increase, but whatever is lost from one's lifetime yesterday, its return cannot be hoped for today.
25. Every person is seeking his aspirations while [concurrently] being sought by his death.
26. How many a person is deluded by hopes, [and] ends up wasting his actions!
27. Hope is sufficient as a deception.
28. Increased aspirations stem from corruption of the intellect.
29. For every hope there is a delusion.
30. Hopes never end.
31. Hope causes death to be forgotten.
32. Aspirations are incentives for men.
33. Hope is the veil of death.
34. There is no end to hope.
35. Hope is an intimate companion.
36. Hope is a cheater, deceiver, and harmer.
37. Hope corrupts [one's] actions and wastes [one's] lifetime.
38. Aspirations blind the eyes of insight.
39. Aspirations beguile you, and in the presence of reality, they abandon you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

40. Verily I am fighting against my hopes and waiting for my death.
41. Verily you will not reach what you hope for and will never surpass death, so be conscious of Allah and be moderate in your desires.
42. If you are deceived by hopes, you will surely be annihilated by the fast approaching death and will have lost [the opportunity to perform] good deeds.
43. The bane of hopes is the coming of death.
44. The bane of hope is death.
45. With the realization of hopes, it becomes easier to overcome [one's] fears.
46. The worst habit is hoping [for too much] as it wastes one's lifetime and causes one to lose [the opportunity to perform good] deeds.
47. Keep away from vain hopes, for they take away the delight of the blessings of Allah from you and make them seem small and insignificant, thereby increasing your lack of gratitude.
48. The fruit of hope is corruption of deeds.
49. The product of aspirations is regret (and its fruit is loss).
50. How close death is to hope!
51. How corrupting is hope for deeds!
52. How severing is death for hope!
53. No one lengthens his hopes except that he [also] curtails his actions.
54. What is the matter with you? You hope for that which you do not achieve, amass wealth which you do not use and build houses which you do not occupy!
55. No one lengthens his hopes except that he forgets death and performs evil actions.
56. The best assistance for action is curtailing hopes.
57. Let aspirations and ploys not deceive you, for this suffices as ineptness.
58. No deception is more misleading than hope.
59. Nothing is more untrue than hope.
60. Aspirations are not loyal to those who rely on them.
61. The smallest of hopes leads to corruption of actions.
62. Be wary of [false] aspirations, for verily they are certain [causes of] deaths.
63. Be cautious not to depend on hopes, for they are the wares of the unintelligent.
64. The most beneficial cure is abandoning [false] aspirations.
65. Aspirations are scattered [and dispersed].
66. Aspirations delude.
67. False aspiration is the trait of fools.
68. Submission to hope corrupts [one's] actions.
69. It is when death comes that the failure of hopes becomes apparent.
70. I wonder at the one who has no control over his death, how can he lengthen his hopes?
71. The end of hope is death.
72. The farthest thing is hope.
73. Those who have the most [false] hopes are the ones who remember death the least.
74. Those who have the longest hopes are the ones whose deeds are the worst.
75. Verily Allah, the Glorified, hates the one who has long hopes and performs evil actions.
76. Indeed man reaches near [the realization of] his hopes, when the [sudden] approach of his death cuts them short, then - Glory be to Allah! - Neither is the hope realized nor is the hoper spared.
77. Be cautious not to lengthen [your] hope, for many a deceived person has been enticed by his long hope and corrupted his deeds and cut [short] his lifetime, then neither was his hope realized nor was that which he lost regained.
78. Where will the falsehoods of hopes mislead you to?!
79. Where will the mirage of hopes misguide you to?!
80. The most delusive thing is hope.
81. The one who is worst in bargaining and most unsuccessful in striving is he who exerts himself in seeking the realization of his hopes while fate does not help him in his aims, and [as a result] he leaves this world in a sorrowful state and proceeds to the next world where he faces the consequences.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

82. Hope is treacherous.
83. Hope deceives and lifetime passes.
84. Hope misleads and transgression strikes down.
85. One who is deceived by hopes is misled.
86. Aspirations are the wares of the unintelligent.
87. Hopes are the delusions of the foolish.
88. Hopes bring death closer.
89. One whose aspirations increase, his satisfaction decreases.
90. One whose hopes lengthen, his actions become worse.
91. One who is deceived by hope is misled by it.
92. One who is deceived by aspirations is belied by death.
93. One who reaches the end of his hopes should expect the arrival of his death.
94. One who follows his aspirations faces increased hardship.
95. One who proceeds on the path of his hopes, stumbles upon his death.
96. One whose aspirations increase, his hardship increases.
97. One who hopes for that which is not possible, his anticipation becomes long.
98. One whose hope is [to reach] Allah, shall realize the fulfilment of his hope and aspiration.
99. Whoever regards his remaining lifetime to be fleeting, his hopes and aspirations become short.
100. One who proceeds on the course of his hopes, stumbles upon his death.
101. One who hopes for anything other than Allah, the Glorified, has given lie to his hopes.
102. One who seeks support from his aspirations becomes penniless.
103. It is foolishness to depending on [one's] hope.
104. The humiliation of men is in the dashing of hopes.
105. May Allah have mercy on the man who shortens his hopes, anticipates death, makes good use of his time and takes with him the provisions of [good] deeds.
106. Many an aspiration may lie beneath death.
107. Take away from your long hopes and increase your short lifetime, and do not be deceived by your good physical health and yesterday's wellbeing, for life is short and good health is prone to change.
108. The worst poverty is [false] aspiration.
109. Lifetimes are wasted between hope and aspiration.
110. Blessed is he who shortens his hopes and makes good use of his time.
111. Blessed is he who belies his aspirations and sacrifices his world in order to build his Hereafter.
112. One who relies on his aspirations dies without [realizing] his hopes.
113. One who trusts his aspirations will have them severed by death.
114. Whoever shortens his hopes, beautifies his actions.
115. Whoever lengthens his hopes, corrupts his actions.

16. THE LEADER

1. A just leader is better [and more beneficial] than heavy rainfall.
2. One who obeys his Imām has obeyed his Lord.
3. A leader needs a wise mind, an eloquent tongue and a heart that is steadfast in the establishment of truth.

17. LEADERSHIP

1. Leadership (imāmah) is a social order.
2. Leadership is an organizational structure for the society

18. GRANTING REFUGE TO THE FEARFUL

1. Whoever gives refuge to the one who seeks his help, Allah will grant him refuge from His punishment.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. One who protects a fearful person from what he fears, Allah, the Glorified, will protect him from His chastisement.

19. THE SECURE

1. Many a person who is secure gets frightened.

20. SECURITY

1. Nothing brings greater security than [having] faith and [performing] good deeds.
2. By Allah, no one hinders the security of the peaceful or takes away the rights of the people except the disbelieving infidel and the duplicitous apostate.
3. Do not be deceived by [a false sense of] security, for you will surely be taken from your sanctuary.
4. It is not appropriate for an intelligent person to live in fear when he has found a way to [attain] security.
5. There is no blessing better than security.
6. Security is [a cause of] deception; fear is [a means of] precaution.
7. The sweetness of security is spoilt by the bitterness of fear and panic.
8. Many a security turns into fear.
9. The comfort of life is in security.

21. FEELING SECURE FROM ALLAH'S SCHEME

1. One who feels secure from the scheme of Allah, his sense of security is futile (or his faith is nullified).
2. He from whose evil people are not safe, is not secure from the punishment of Allah.

22. THE TRUSTWORTHY

1. How few are the reliable, trustworthy people, and how many are the treacherous!

23. TRUSTWORTHINESS

1. Trustworthiness leads to truthfulness.
2. Trustworthiness and loyalty are sincere actions, lying and fabrication are perfidious utterances.
3. Return the trust to the one who has entrusted it to you, and do not act treacherously with the one who betrayed your trust.
4. Return the trust when it is entrusted to you, and do not accuse anyone when you entrust something to him, for surely one who is not trustworthy has no faith.
5. The best [form of] trustworthiness is keeping one's promise.
6. Trustworthiness is [a sign of] faith; cheerfulness is [a form of] kindness.
7. Trustworthiness is preservation [and safeguarding of what has been entrusted].
8. Trustworthiness is a success for the one who observes it.
9. Trustworthiness is a merit for the one who executes it.
10. The bane of trustworthiness is treachery.
11. When you are entrusted with something, then do not betray [the trust].
12. When you entrust anyone [with something], then do not accuse them of treachery.
13. When trustworthiness becomes stronger, truthfulness increases.
14. The cornerstone of faith is trustworthiness.
15. Sound trustworthiness is a symbol of good conviction.
16. Espouse trustworthiness for it is the best [form of] religiosity.
17. Corruption of trustworthiness is submission to treachery.
18. Successful is the one who clothes himself with loyalty and arms himself with trustworthiness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. Everything that is not fit to be disclosed is a trust, even if itsity is not specifically sought.
20. One who has no trustworthiness has no faith.
21. One who takes [the] keeping [of] trust lightly will fall into treachery.
22. One who acts with trustworthiness has perfected his religion.
23. The best trust that can be kept is fulfilling [one's] obligations.
24. There is no faith in one who is not trustworthy.
25. There is no trustworthiness in one who has no religion.

24. FAITH

1. Faith is the better of the two trusts (or securities).
2. Faith is acknowledging with the tongue and acting with the limbs.
3. Faith and modesty are linked in one linkage and they do not separate.
4. Faith and knowledge (or action) are twin brothers and companions who do not part ways.
5. Faith is a tree, its root is certitude, its branch is piety, its sunlight is modesty and its fruit is generosity.
6. Faith, sincerity, certitude and piety are [encapsulated in] patience and acceptance of what has been decreed [by Allah].
7. Faith and action are twin brothers and companions who do not part ways; Allah does not accept one without its counterpart.
8. The best [sign of] faith is trustworthiness.
9. The best faith is [based on] complete certitude.
10. The people who are strongest in faith are those who rely the most on Allah, the Glorified.
11. The closest people to Allah, the Glorified, are the ones with the greatest faith.
12. The best faith is [accompanied with] sincerity and good deeds, and the worst traits are cruelty and aggression.
13. The best faith is [based on] complete certitude, and the greatest honour is [in] doing good deeds.
14. Verily the best faith is for a man to act justly with others.
15. Indeed the place of faith is the heart, and the path to it is [through] the ears.
16. Faith is security.
17. Faith is the path with manifest inner secrets.
18. Faith is an effective intercessor.
19. Faith is free of jealousy.
20. Faith is the loftiest goal.
21. Disbelief is wiped out by faith.
22. Faith is sincerity in action.
23. Salvation comes with faith.
24. Faith is a flame that cannot be extinguished.
25. Faith is free of hypocrisy.
26. Faith is patience in tribulation and gratitude in ease.
27. If you have faith in Allah, your place of return will be secure.
28. It is through faith that salvation is attained.
29. It is through faith that one is guided towards virtuous actions.
30. It is through faith that one reaches the pinnacle of felicity and the zenith of happiness.
31. Faith is salvation.
32. The fruit of faith is success with Allah.
33. The fruit of faith is desire for the Eternal Abode.
34. Three things, if possessed, complete one's faith: intellect, forbearance and knowledge.
35. Three things, if possessed, perfect one's faith: that when one is pleased, his pleasure does not lead him towards vice; and when he gets angry, his anger does not draw him away from the truth; and when he is in a position of power, he never takes that which is not his.
36. Three things, if possessed, perfect one's faith: justice in anger and contentment, moderation in poverty and wealth, and maintaining a balance between fear and hope.
37. Three things are from the treasures of faith: concealing misfortune, charity and sickness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

38. Virtuous chastity and contentment with what suffices are from the pillars of faith.
39. Lowering your voice, casting down your gaze and walking with modesty are from the signs of faith and religiousness.
40. Contently remaining obedient [to Allah], performing good deeds and hastening towards noble traits are from the perfections of faith and the best virtues.
41. The embellishment of faith is piety.
42. He ('a) said about faith: It is nearness [to Allah] for the one who guards [against evil], confidence for the one who trusts [in Allah], comfort for the one who entrusts [his affairs to Allah] and a shield for the one who
43. endures patiently.
44. The embellishment of faith is [in] purity of one's innermost thoughts [and secrets] and [performing] good deeds in the open.
45. Ask Allah for [strong] faith and act upon the ordinances of the Qur'an.
46. The worst faith is that in which doubt enters.
47. The uprightness of faith is [in] piety and its corruption is [in] greed.
48. True faith and good deeds are the best provisions.
49. Protect your faith from doubt, for doubt spoils faith the same way salt spoils honey.
50. Make your faith sincere, for this is the path to Paradise and safety from hellfire.
51. It is on truth and trust that faith is based.
52. The pinnacle of faith is certitude.
53. The highest degree of faith is befriending for the sake of Allah, having enmity for the sake of Allah, spending on each other for the sake of Allah and establishing ties with each other for the sake of Allah, the Glorified.
54. One type of faith is that which is firmly fixed in the hearts and another is that which shifts between the hearts and breasts [without being firmly fixed in the hearts].
55. Allah, the Glorified, has prescribed faith as a purification from doubt.
56. Faith has made it incumbent on its possessor to establish the traditions of Islam and its ordinances.
57. Strengthen your faith with certitude, for this is the best religion.
58. How can he who resents the truth taste the sweetness of faith?
59. Acquiring faith is [through] adhering to the truth and being sincere with the creatures.
60. He who claims to have faith yet is infatuated by misleading aspirations and false amusements of this world, has lied.
61. The conception of faith is [achieved through] the recitation of the Qur'an.
62. One who entertains doubt in his faith [in one God] becomes a polytheist.
63. One who has no faith has no trustworthiness.
64. One who likes his faith to become perfect should ensure that his love, hate, pleasure and displeasure are [all] for the sake of Allah.
65. One who gives for the sake of Allah, withholds for the sake of Allah, loves for the sake of Allah and hates for the sake of Allah, has perfected [his] faith.
66. The basis of faith is unwavering certitude.
67. One whose faith is true is saved, and one whose submission is complete is guided.
68. There is no honour higher than faith.
69. There is no medium more successful than faith.
70. There is no faith like modesty and generosity.
71. Faith without piety is of no benefit.
72. A servant's faith is not complete until he loves whom Allah, the Glorified, loves and hates the one whom Allah, the Glorified, hates.
73. The faith of a servant is not true until he is more confident of what is in the Hand of Allah, the Glorified, than what is in his own hand.
74. Nothing that is preserved by human beings is like faith in Allah and good deeds.
75. The faith of a man is deduced by his submission and obedience [to Allah].
76. The faith [of a person] is deduced by increased fear [of Allah], controlling lust and overcoming lowly desires.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

77. Faith requires certitude.
78. Faith requires sincerity.
79. One who believes in Allah [and attests to His oneness] is saved.
80. The foundation of faith is total submission to the will of Allah.
81. Have faith and you will be safe.

25. THE BELIEVER

1. A believer is very truthful in [his] speech and generous in [his] benevolence.
2. A believer is [always] alert, waiting for one of the two boons [of this world or the Hereafter].
3. A believer is chaste, contented, free from sin and pious.
4. A believer is one whose love is for [the sake of] Allah, whose hate is for Allah, whose taking is for Allah and whose leaving is for Allah.
5. A believer is thankful in [times of] comfort, patient in tribulation and fearful in affluence.
6. A believer is moderate in [times of] affluence, [and] keeps away from the [pleasures of this] world.
7. A believer is [always] between blessing and wrongdoing, [and] nothing reforms these two except thankfulness and repentance.
8. A believer is dignified, honourable, self-reliant, cautious and sorrowful.
9. A believer constantly remembers [Allah], frequently contemplates, is thankful for blessings and patient in the face of tribulation.
10. A believer is modest, independent, certain and pious.
11. When a believer is asked [for help], he helps, and when he asks [other for help], he is lenient [and does not overburden them].
12. A believer is wary of his sins, always fearing chastisement and hoping for the mercy of his Lord.
13. To a believer, this world is his arena, action is his endeavour, death is his gift and Paradise is his prize.
14. A believer is one who has purified his heart of vileness.
15. A believer is one whose affair is near, whose sorrow is distant, whose silence is much and whose actions are sincere.
16. A believer is eager in [his] obedience [to Allah] and refrains from what is forbidden.
17. The soul of a believer is firmer than a hard rock while he is [himself] humbler than a slave.
18. When a believer observes, he takes lesson; and when he is quiet, he contemplates; and when he speaks, he remembers [Allah]; and when he is given, he is grateful; and when he undergoes hardship, he is patient.
19. When a believer is admonished, he restrains himself; and when he is warned, he becomes cautious; and when he is shown an example, he learns [from it]; and when he is reminded, he remembers; and when he is oppressed, he forgives.
20. The persistence of a believer is [in] his renunciation [of worldly pleasures], his interest is [in] his religiosity, his dignity is [in] his contentment and his striving is for his Hereafter. His good deeds are many, his status is elevated and he has managed [to gain] his freedom and salvation.
21. A believer looks at this world with eyes that derive lesson, and consumes from it only what is necessary, and hears in it with ears of hatred and enmity [towards it].
22. The believers blame themselves and are fearful of their past mistakes; they detest this world, eagerly yearn for the Hereafter and hasten towards [acts of] obedience.
23. A believer is one who bears with the harm that people inflict [on him] but nobody is ever harmed by him.
24. The believer is one who safeguards his Hereafter by [sacrificing] his world, while the vicious is one who safeguards his world by [sacrificing] his Hereafter.
25. A believer is faithful to himself and struggles against his vain desires and feelings.
26. Be careful of the opinions of believers, for Allah, the Glorified, effectuates the truth through their tongues.
27. The most honourable of believers is the most sagacious of them.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

28. The best of believers in terms of belief is the one whose taking, giving, anger and pleasure are all for [the sake of] Allah.
29. Believers are indeed compassionate.
30. Verily believers are afraid [of displeasing Allah].
31. Indeed the cheerfulness of a believer is in his face, his strength is in his religion and his sorrow is in his heart.
32. Verily a believer feels ashamed if an act which goes against his faith is committed by him.
33. The goal of a believer is Paradise.
34. The needlessness of a believer is through [his reliance on] Allah, the Glorified.
35. He (the believer) has enlivened his intellect, killed his lust, obeyed his Lord and disobeyed his lower-self.
36. How many a believer has succeeded through patience and thinking positively.
37. Be a pious, contented and modest believer.
38. A believer has a perfect intellect, a pleasing leniency, an inclination towards good deeds and an aversion towards bad deeds.
39. A believer has three times: a time for whispering to his Lord, a time for assessing himself (or in another narration: a time for making arrangements for his livelihood) and a time when he freely enjoys himself with what is lawful and pleasant.
40. The faith of a believer is not perfected until he deems comfort to be a trial and affliction to be a blessing.
41. A believer is never found to be envious, malevolent or miserly.
42. A believer is never anything other than forbearing and merciful.
43. It behoves a believer to feel ashamed if the thought of disobedience crosses his mind.
44. It behoves a believer to remain obedient and to cover himself with piety and contentment.
45. A believer is tested with affliction just like the purity of gold and silver is tested with fire.
46. There are three signs of a believer: truthfulness, certitude and [having] short hopes.
47. A believer is never found to be anything but content.
48. He who is not concerned about improving his Hereafter is not a believer.
49. If I were to strike the nose of a believer to make him hate me he would still not hate me, and if I were to bestow the whole world to a hypocrite to make him love me he would still not love me.
50. One who believes is safe.
51. One who believes increases his certitude.
52. One who believes in Allah seeks [help and] protection from Him.
53. A believer has not [truly] believed until he comprehends.
54. The example of a believer is like that of citronella, both its taste and its fragrance are pleasant.
55. One who purifies his faith is guided.
56. The concern of a believer is for his Hereafter, and all his efforts are for his place of [final] return.
57. A believer is never satiated while his brother is hungry.
58. A believer never falls short of forbearance and never gets anxious when faced with difficulty.
59. A man does not become a [true] believer until he is no longer concerned about what [food] will end his pangs of hunger and which of his two attires he will wear.
60. The cheerfulness of a believer is in his face and his sorrow is in his heart. He has the broadest chest (i.e. has great patience, knowledge and virtue) and is most humble in spirit. He hates high position and dislikes renown. His grief is long, his sorrow is distant, his silence is much and his time is occupied. He is grateful and patient, submerged in his thoughts [about the Hereafter], sparing in his friendship, easy going and of soft temperament. He is firmer than a hard rock but humbler than a slave.
61. The beauty of a believer's face is from the special favour of Allah on him.
62. Verily the certitude of a believer is seen in his actions and the doubt of a hypocrite is seen in his actions.
63. A believer is sagacious and intelligent.
64. A believer is free from perversion and dissension.
65. A believer is penitent, repentant and remorseful.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

66. The nature of a believer is [being] sincere and his trait is suppressing anger.
67. The believers are such that their good deeds are expected and people are safe from their evil.
68. The fear of a believer is in his heart and his repentance is in his admission.
69. Three things are adornments for believers: fear of Allah, truthful speech and returning trusts [to their rightful owners].
70. The beauty of a believer is his piety.
71. The joy of a believer is in the obedience of his Lord, and his sorrow is due to his sin.
72. The integrity of a believer is in his keeping away from what is forbidden and hastening towards virtues.
73. A believer is easy going, polite, approachable and reliable.
74. A believer makes few mistakes and does plenty of work.
75. The demeanour of a believer is characterized by moderation and his conduct is upright.
76. A believer loathes idle play and likes to work hard.
77. When the soul of a believer ascends to the heavens, the angels are amazed and say: It is incredible how he was saved from a place where the best of us got corrupted.
78. A believer is sorrowful in his thoughts [about himself], sparing in his friendship.
79. A believer has a mild disposition and is easy going.
80. A believer does not oppress [anyone] and eschews sin.
81. A believer is fair to the one who is unfair to him.
82. A believer is affectionate, endearing and compassionate.
83. Indeed believers are approachable and soft-hearted.
84. Believers are indeed virtuous.
85. Indeed believers are fearful [of Allah].
86. A believer is [gauged] by his actions.
87. Believers possess more intelligence [than others].

26. THE HUMAN BEING

1. The human being is [distinguished] by his intellect.
2. The uprightness of a human being is in controlling the tongue and doing good deeds.
1. He ('a) said about the one whom he censured: He does not anticipate any misfortune and does not humble himself in piety. He does not know the door of guidance so as to go towards it, nor [does he know] the door of perdition so as to turn away from it.

27. INTIMACY WITH ALLAH

1. The fruit of intimacy with Allah is keeping aloof from the people.
2. How can one become intimate with Allah when he has not separated himself from the creation?
3. One who is intimate with Allah keeps aloof from the people.
4. One who keeps aloof from the people, becomes intimate with Allah, the Glorified.

28. INTIMACY

1. The comfort of security is removed by the anxiety of loneliness and the apprehension of fear disturbs the familiarity of society.
2. Intimacy is in three [people]: A compatible wife, a righteous child and an agreeable brother.
3. The most deserving of intimacy among the people is the close friend.

29. DELIBERATENESS AND ACTING UNHURRIEDLY

1. Acting slowly is praiseworthy in everything except in opportunities for [doing] good.
2. Taking time [to ascertain] is better than making haste, except in opportunities for [doing] good.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Deliberateness is judiciousness.
4. Deliberateness brings about assurance.
5. Deliberateness in action protects against errancy.
6. Through deliberateness, matters become easy.
7. Confidence in speech protects from slips and mistakes.
8. Through deliberateness, means become easy.
9. Slowly! Darkness is disappearing; as though those who had departed have arrived [at their final destination] and those who hasten will soon join.
10. Bind your haste with your deliberateness, your domination with your friendliness and your evil [traits] with your good [ones]. Help the intellect overcome vain desires and you will possess understanding.
11. You must adopt deliberateness, for indeed one who acts unhurriedly is deserving of success.
12. In deliberateness there is [precaution and] assurance.
13. In deliberateness there is safety.
14. One who acts without haste is saved from mistakes.
15. There is no success for one who has no deliberateness.
16. Deliberateness is a virtue.
17. Deliberateness is success.

30. ONE WHO ACTS WITH DELIBERATENESS

1. One who acts unhurriedly is deserving of success.
2. The one who acts with deliberateness is successful even if he perishes.
3. The one who acts without haste is either successful or close to success.

31. STRENGTHENING ONESELF

1. Strengthening oneself is [a sign of] judiciousness.

32. MISERY

1. How close is misery to felicity, and death to life.

33. STINGINESS AND AVARICE

1. Stinginess is one of the two forms of poverty.
2. Stinginess earns dishonor and makes one enter hellfire.
3. Stinginess in spending from one's wealth that which Allah, the Glorified, has made obligatory, is the worst type of stinginess.
4. Protect yourselves from vehement miserliness, malice, anger and jealousy and prepare for each of these things a contrivance which you can fight it with, like thinking about the consequence, refraining [from] vice, seeking virtue, improving your Hereafter and espousing forbearance.
5. Be wary of stinginess, for it is ignobility and [leads to] vilification.
6. Be wary of avarice, for verily it brings hate, tarnishes [one's] good qualities and exposes [one's] faults.
7. I bid you not to adorn yourself with stinginess, for it will disparage you near those who are close to you and will make you hated by your relatives.
8. I bid you to refrain from avarice, for it is the garment of indigence and the bridle that is used to drive one towards every [type of] vileness.
9. I bid you to refrain from stinginess, for the miser is hated by strangers and shunned by those who are close to him.
10. The worst stinginess is withholding money from those who deserve it.
11. Stinginess is [a form of] poverty.
12. Avarice leads to vilification.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

13. Making too many excuses is a sign of stinginess.
14. Avarice earns vilification.
15. Stinginess degrades its possessor.
16. Stinginess earns condemnation.
17. Stinginess gives rise to hatred.
18. Stinginess with what is available [in one's possession] is thinking negatively of God.
19. Stinginess humiliates its possessor and elevates the one who turns away from it.
20. Through stinginess, vilification increases.
21. The worst trait is stinginess.
22. Excessive avarice sullies chivalry and spoils brotherhood.
23. In avarice there is vilification (and dishonour).
24. Excessive avarice leads to vilification.
25. If you were to see stinginess in the form of a man, you would have surely seen an ugly, disfigured person.
26. If you were to see stinginess in the form of a man, you would have surely seen a disfigured person, from whom every eye would look away and every heart would turn away.
27. One who persists in avarice is deprived of [sincere] advisers.
28. Avarice is one of the most revolting traits.
29. How revolting is stinginess with affluence!
30. How revolting is stinginess by those who possess nobility.
31. Nothing brings down the wrath of Allah like stinginess.
32. The honourable do not flee from death the way they flee from stinginess and the company of the wicked.
33. There is no vilification like avarice.
34. There is no alienation like avarice.
35. There is no magnanimity with avarice.
36. There is no evil trait worse than avarice.
37. There is no evil trait worse than stinginess

34. THE MISER AND THE AVARICIOUS

1. A miser is stingy towards himself with little of his worldly possessions and leaves all the rest for his heirs.
2. A miser gives up of more of his honour than what he holds of his possessions and loses multiple times more of his religion than what he saves of his property.
3. The farthest of creatures from Allah, the Exalted, is the wealthy miser.
4. The most miserly with his possessions is the most generous with his honour.
5. The most miserly of all people is the one who is stingy to himself with his wealth, and [eventually] leaves it behind for his heirs.
6. The miser is dispraised, the envious is disheartened.
7. The miser is a treasurer for his heirs.
8. A miser hastens poverty.
9. A miser is always disgraced.
10. A miser always comes up with excuses and pretexts.
11. A miser is abased among those who are dear to him.
12. I am amazed at the wretched miser who rushes towards the poverty that is fleeing him and loses the wealth that is seeking him; he lives a life of poverty in this world and is called to account with the reckoning of the wealthy in the Hereafter.
13. The avaricious has no friend.
14. The miser has no close friend.
15. He who is stingy to himself with his wealth is not successful and leaves behind his possessions for others.
16. One who withholds his hand out of fear of poverty has [actually] hastened poverty.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

17. One who is stingy with his wealth is abased.
18. One who is miserly with that which he does not [even] possess, has exceeded in meanness.
19. One who withholds his hand from [spending on] his family has only held back one hand from them but caused many hands to be withheld by them [against him].
20. One who is stingy with his wealth towards himself, is generous with it to his wife's [next] husband.
21. He who is stingy to the one who needs what he possesses, Allah's wrath upon him increases.
22. He who is stingy with his favours has not fastened his faith [and made it firm].
23. He who is stingy with his favours is not intelligent.
24. While passing by some filth in a cesspit, he ('a) said: This is what you were competing for yesterday. And in another narration, he said: This is what the misers were stingy with.
25. Woe to the miser who hastens towards the poverty which has fled from him and abandons the wealth that has sought him.
26. Do not be stingy by acting tightfistedly; and do not waste by acting extravagantly.
27. There is no magnanimity in a miser.
28. Nothing holds back wealth except stinginess, and a miser is blameworthy and liable for punishment.
29. A miser is rebuked in this world, and punished and chastised in the Hereafter.

35. TAKING THE INITIATIVE

1. Take the initiative to act, belie [false] hope and recall death.
2. Take the initiative to act and fear the suddenness of death, [then] you will realize the greatest hope.
3. Hasten towards [virtuous] actions before old age disables you.
4. Hasten towards [virtuous] actions before debilitating illness or sudden death [overtakes you].
5. Hasten towards virtue, for verily virtuous deeds are an opportunity [to secure your Hereafter].
6. Take the initiative to perform good deeds [now] while the neck is free from the noose and the spirit is unfettered.
7. Take the initiative in your youth before your old age and in your health before your illness.
8. Take the initiative in your affluence before your poverty and while you are alive before your death.
9. Take the initiative while the rest of your life is before you, and you have the ability to act by volition, and have the opportunity of repentance, and the possibility of abrogating your misdeeds.
10. Hasten to act while the bodies are healthy, the tongues are untied, the [cry of] repentance is heard and the deeds are accepted.
11. Hasten to act before [you are seized with] the seizing of the all-Powerful, the Omnipotent.
12. Hasten to act before the narrowness and constriction [of the grave].
13. Hasten to act before the terror [of death] and the departure of your soul [from your body].
14. Hasten towards good deeds before your deaths, and purchase what will remain for you [in the Hereafter] with what will depart from you [of this world].
15. Hasten [to do good] with your wealth before your deaths come upon you, so that it may purify you, set you aright and bring you closer [to Allah].
16. Hasten towards obedience [to Allah] and you will be felicitous.
17. Hasten towards good and you will be guided.
18. Hasten [to do good] before the coming of the hidden awaited one.
19. Anticipate death and its throes, prepare for it before its arrival and get ready for it before it descends.
20. Hasten [to act] in the period of guidance and repose of the bodies, and in your remaining lifetime, and while you have the ability to act by volition.
21. Hasten in performing your good deeds and compete with your deaths, for you will be compensated for what you sent forward, rewarded for what you did beforehand and held accountable for what you left behind.
22. Surpass your hope and anticipate the assault of death, for people are on the verge of having their hopes cut short and being surprised by death.
23. Hurry to take advantage of opportunity before it becomes [a cause of] distress.
24. Blessed is the one who hastens to perform good deeds before his means are cut short.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

25. Blessed is he who anticipates death, takes advantage of respite and prepares the provision of good deeds [for the Hereafter].

Notes

1. Also translated: ...at the first available opportunity when the intention is made.

36. COLD WEATHER

1. Be cautious of the cold [of winter] at its onset and embrace it towards its ending, for it acts upon the bodies as it acts upon the branches its beginning scorches and its end causes leaves to grow.

37. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND THOSE WHO PREVENT IT

1. The righteous act is an action that reforms.
2. The righteous act is a good deed.
3. Righteousness is the prize of the judicious.
4. Righteousness is the quickest in acquiring reward.
5. Through righteousness the free man is owned.
6. Hastening to perform righteous acts increases [one's] righteousness.
7. The best benefaction is that which reaches the free.
8. The best righteous act is that which reaches the needy.
9. In every righteous act there is gratitude.
10. One who prevents righteousness is deprived of gratitude.
11. Whoever extends his righteousness, his renown spreads.
12. One whose righteousness is close [at hand], his reputation goes far [and wide].
13. One who follows up one good act with another good act and bears the offences of his brothers and neighbours has perfected [his] virtue.
14. One who is miserly towards you with his cheerfulness will not be generous with his righteousness.
15. One of the best righteous acts is being kind to the orphans.
16. With righteousness, mercy flows forth abundantly.
17. The righteous tongue rejects the foolishness of the ignorant.
18. One whose righteousness increases is praised.
19. Urging the self towards altruism is from the qualities of the righteous.

38. INSISTENCE

1. One who insists [too much] makes others fed up of him.

39. THE INNOCENT

1. The innocent one is healthy, the suspicious one is sick.
2. The innocent one is fearless.
3. How courageous the innocent one is and how timid is the suspicious one!
4. No one is more courageous than an innocent person.
5. Every innocent one is well.

40. BEING CHEERFUL AND SMILING

1. Cheerfulness is one of the two forms of hospitality.
2. Cheerfulness is [a form of] kindness.
3. Cheerfulness is a trap for [ensnaring] affection.
4. Adopt cheerfulness for it is indeed a trap for [ensnaring] affection.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. There is no cheerfulness with annoyance.
6. Cheerfulness cools down the fire of opposition.
7. Cheerfulness is the first gift [that can be given].
8. Cheerfulness is the trait of the free.
9. Cheerfulness makes companions affable.
10. Cheerfulness renders goodness without any expense.
11. By cheerfulness and keeping a smiling face, the act of giving becomes virtuous.
12. Your cheerfulness is your first righteous act and your promise is your first gift.
13. Your cheerfulness shows the nobility of your soul and your humility points to your righteous character.
14. Being cheerful is the first gift and the easiest [form of] generosity.
15. Cheerfulness is one of the two glad tidings.
16. Cheerfulness is the disposition of all those who are [truly] free.
17. Being cheerful is one of the signs of success.
18. The cause of affection is cheerfulness.
19. Smiling with cheerfulness, [practicing] benevolence, [performing] righteous actions and bestowing greetings invites the love of the people.
20. Increased cheerfulness is a sign of benevolence.
21. A cheerful face is better than a serious, frowning face.
22. Cheerfulness is one of the two gifts.
23. Cheerfulness is a delightful countenance and a radiant disposition.
24. Cheerfulness is kindness, frowning is meanness.
25. Cheerfulness is the beginning of righteousness.
26. Keeping a cheerful face is a trait of the free.
27. Cheerfulness is the first gift.

41. SIGHT, OBSERVATION AND INSIGHT

1. Where are the eyes that glance at the [illuminated] signposts of piety?
2. The most observant person is one who sees his own faults and refrains from his sins.
3. [It is narrated that at one time some people looked at a passing woman with lust, at which point the Imam ('a) said:] Verily the eyes of these virile males are covetous and this glancing is the cause of their lust. Whenever any of you sees a woman whom he finds attractive, he should go to his wife, because she [too] is a woman like her.
4. Indeed the perceptive person is one who listens and then ponders, sees then reflects, and derives benefit from examples.
5. It is through observation [and reflection] that lessons are learned.
6. The loss of eyesight is better than the blinding of insight.
7. Loss of vision is better than looking at something that causes temptation.
8. Sometimes the one who can see [also] loses his way.
9. Loss of eyesight is easier than loss of insight.
10. One who has lost his sight makes wrong judgments.
11. Indeed the secrets have been revealed for people of insight.
12. You are shown if you observe, made to hear if you listen, and guided if you seek guidance.
13. Whoever reflects with astuteness, wisdom gets established for him and he understands the lesson [of the past].
14. Eyesight is of no benefit if insight is blinded.
15. One who does not ponder has no insight.
16. The glance is a pathfinder of infatuations.
17. Many a passion is aroused by a [single] glance.
18. The blinding of sight is better than a lot of gazing [at what is forbidden].
19. How many a passion has been aroused from a [single] glance!
20. How many gazes have led to regret!

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

21. A person's glance is the scout of his heart.
22. One who glances [everywhere] freely, his regret increases.
23. Vision is not attained by sight [alone], for sight can fool its possessor.

42. WANTONNESS

1. Wantonness takes away blessings and brings chastisement.

43. FALSEHOOD AND ASSISTING IT

2. One who is pleased with the action of a group is like one who participates in it with them, and for everyone who participates in falsehood there are two sins: the sin of being pleased with it and the sin of acting upon it.
3. Falsehood is the opposer of truth.
4. Falsehood is a deceptive beguiler.
5. Falsehood is the weakest supporter.
6. Falsehood [is like a mount that] makes its rider stumble.
7. Falsehoods hurl one into deviations.
8. Collaborating in support of falsehood is vileness and treachery.
9. Oppose the one who opposes the truth for falsehood; and leave him and that which he has chosen for himself.
10. Seeking assistance in support of falsehood is a serious offence and an act of treachery.
11. One who helps falsehood has oppressed the truth.
12. How can one separate from falsehood when he has not attached [himself] to the truth?
13. Falsehood has a [fixed] circuit.
14. There is no joy in a flash of lightening for one who is immersed in darkness.
15. One who embarks on falsehood, regrets.
16. One whose falsehood increases, his truth will never be accepted.
17. One who rides on falsehood, his mount will destroy him.
18. One who embarks on falsehood, his feet will slip.
19. One whose goal is falsehood will not perceive the truth even if it is more manifest than the sun.
20. One who supports falsehood, regrets.
21. How ugly falsehood is!
22. The one who employs falsehood is chastised and condemned.
23. One who resorts to falsehood does not become powerful.

44. THE FALSIFIER

1. The aim of the falsifier is [to cause] corruption.

45. THE STOMACH AND THE PRIVATE PARTS

1. Protect your stomach and your private parts from what is forbidden.
2. Protect your stomach and your private parts, for in these two lie your trials [and afflictions].
3. A man's stomach is his enemy.
4. How far is goodness from the one whose efforts are [solely] for his stomach and private parts!
5. The most detested servant in the sight of Allah, the Glorified, is the one whose concern (and effort) is [solely] for his stomach and his private parts.

46. EARLY RISING

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Wake up early [in the morning] for there is blessing in early rising; and consult each other, for success is in consultation.

47. WEeping

1. Weeping out of fear of Allah, because of being far from Allah, is the worship of the cognizant.
2. Weeping out of the fear of Allah illuminates the heart and protects [one] from repetition of sin.
3. Weeping out of the fear of Allah is the key to [divine] mercy.
4. Weeping is the trait of the soft-hearted [and those who fear Allah].
5. By weeping out of the fear of Allah, sins get purified.
6. The weeping of a servant out of the fear of Allah clears away his sins.
7. Blessed is the one who is granted success in his worship and weeps because of his sins.

48. COUNTRIES AND HOMELANDS

1. The worst of countries is the country in which there is neither peace nor productivity.
2. The worst homelands are those in which the inhabitants are not safe.
3. There is no country (or city) that has a greater right over you than another; the best country is the one that bears you.

49. ELOQUENCE

1. Eloquence is that which is easy on speech and light on reasoning.
2. Eloquence is to reply without hesitation and [to speak] correctly, without making mistakes.
3. Conciseness can be enough of an eloquence.
4. One who undertakes the rending and mending of speech has attained eloquence.
5. The tools of rhetoric are: an intelligent mind and an eloquent tongue.
6. Sometimes even the eloquent one is left speechless.

Notes

1. Meaning: eloquence is that which is easily spoken and easily understood.

50. ATTENTION

1. One whose attention reduces is [taken unawares and] thrown down.

51. THE Umayyads

1. While recalling the [rule of the] Umayyads (he said): It is the spittle from the deliciousness of [this temporary] life; they [shall] taste it for a short while and then spit it all out.

52. QUADRUPEDS AND PREDATORS

1. Verily the [only] concern of quadrupeds (i.e. animals with four legs) is their stomachs.
2. Indeed the [only] concern of predators is attacking other animals.

53. FABRICATING LIES

1. There is no shamelessness like fabricating lies.

54. THE HOUSE OF ALLAH

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Visiting the House of Allah is a safeguard against the torment of hellfire.

55. THE TREASURY

1. Verily this wealth is not for me or you, rather it belongs to the Muslims and [is] for obtaining their weapons [of defence]; so if you participate in their war [with them] then you are a partner in it, otherwise that which their hands have acquired cannot be for other than their [own] consumption.

56. TRADE AND BUSINESS WITH ALLAH

1. Do business with Allah and you will profit.
2. Whoever does business with Allah, profits.
3. One who carries out transactions without knowledge, falls into usury.

57. THE MERCHANT

1. The merchant puts himself at risk [of doing something that is forbidden].

58. EARTH

1. What a good purifier earth is!

59. ABANDONING FOR THE SAKE OF ALLAH

1. One who abandons something for the sake of Allah, the Glorified, is granted something better than it by Allah.

60. REPENTANCE AND RETURNING (TO ALLAH)

1. Repentance is heartfelt regret, seeking forgiveness with the tongue, abandoning [the sin] with the limbs and a determination never to repeat it again.
2. Be careful not to make haste in sinning and to delay repentance, thereby making your punishment greater.
3. Is there no one who is repentant for his sins before his death comes?
4. Repentance is an eraser [of bad deeds].
5. One who confesses his sins [and feels regret] is repentant.
6. Repentance causes [divine] mercy to descend.
7. Sincere repentance cancels [one's] sins.
8. Repentance purifies the hearts and washes away sins.
9. Through repentance, sins are purged.
10. Through repentance, sins are expiated.
11. The fruit of repentance is correcting the excesses of the self.
12. Sincere repentance erases misdeeds.
13. One who repents [with sincerity] has indeed returned [to Allah].
14. One who is granted repentance will not be deprived of its acceptance.
15. How devastating repentance is for the great crimes [one commits]!
16. There is no good in this world except for two [types of] people: the person who makes amends for the sins that he commits, through repentance, and the person who struggles against his lower-self in obedience to Allah, the Glorified.
17. The smallest [amount of] repentance and seeking forgiveness purges sins and repeated misdeeds.
18. It is by returning [to Allah] that forgiveness is gained.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

61. RELYING ON ALLAH

1. The foundation of contentment is complete reliance on Allah.
2. Relying on Allah is the strongest hope.

62. REWARD

1. Acquiring [divine] reward is the best achievement and coming close to Allah is the pinnacle of success.
2. Reward is gained in proportion to the difficulty endured.
3. There is no gain like divine reward.
4. There is no provision [for the Hereafter] like reward [for good deeds].

63. GARMENTS

1. Raise your garment (i.e. do not let it be too long) for that is purer for you, safer for your heart and more long-lasting on you.
2. Wear that which neither makes you famous nor degrades you.

64. COWARDICE

1. Be wary of cowardice for it is indeed disgraceful and [is] a deficiency.
2. Cowardice is an affliction and impuissance is feeble-mindedness.
3. Extreme cowardice stems from impuissance of the self and weakness of conviction.

65. DILIGENCE AND STRIVING

1. The best striving is that which is accompanied by [divinely granted] success.
2. You must be diligent even if you are not assisted by [good] fortune.
3. One who is diligent becomes fortunate.
4. Striving has been linked to achievement.
5. One whose diligence becomes weaker, his opponent gets stronger.
6. Whoever embarks upon [any action with] diligence, overpowers his opponent.
7. One who employs diligence arrives at his goal.
8. One who strives with all his effort arrives at the core of his desired objective.
9. Striving is useless without accomplishment.
10. Striving is useless without [divinely given] success.

66. EXPERIENCE

1. Experiences don't end.
2. Experiences are beneficial knowledge.
3. Experience bears the fruit of learning.
4. The fruit of experience is making the right choice.
5. Preservation of experiences is the pinnacle of intelligence.
6. The best of what you have experienced is that which taught you a lesson.
7. In every experience there is an admonition.
8. Experiences suffice as educators.
9. One who experiences, increases in judiciousness.
10. One whose experiences increase, his negligence decreases.
11. One who consolidates the experiences [he has had] will be safe from danger.
12. One who discards experiences becomes blind to the consequences [of his actions].
13. Whoever preserves [and learns from his] experiences, his actions become correct.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

14. One who lacks experience is [easily] deceived.

67. THE EXPERIENCED

1. The experienced person is more proficient than a doctor [who is inexperienced].

68. ANXIETY

1. Anxiety during hardship completes [and enhances] the calamity.
2. Anxiety during adversity is severer than the adversity itself.
3. The adversity is one, but if you become anxious it becomes twofold.
4. Adversity [endured] with patience is the better of the two adversities.
5. Anxiety does not ward off destiny, rather it blocks recompense.
6. Anxiety during adversity increases it whereas patience ends it.
7. Overcome anxiety with patience, for anxiety voids recompense and magnifies the calamity.
8. Anxiety is [a cause of] destruction.
9. Anxiety is one of the assistants of the [difficult] time.
10. Anxiety magnifies the calamity.
11. Anxiety is more exhausting than patience.
12. If you are [one who gets] anxious about all that has escaped from your hands, then be anxious about what has not reached you.
13. With excessive anxiety, the calamity is magnified.
14. Counter anxiety with patience.
15. There is no recompense with anxiety.
16. Whoever becomes anxious, his adversity increases.
17. One who is overcome by anxiety is deprived of the merit of patience.
18. One who becomes anxious has tormented himself, neglected the command of Allah, the Glorified, and sold off his reward.
19. Do not get anxious in the [face of] little that you dislike for it will put you in a lot of what you dislike.
20. Patience and anxiety do not go together.

69. REQUITAL AND REWARD

1. One who believes in [divine] requital does not choose [to do] anything but good.
2. One who is certain about requital does not choose [to do] anything but good.
3. The reward is proportionate to the tribulation [endured].
4. The grant [of reward] from Allah is proportionate to the [sincerity of] intention.
5. One who is not certain of the recompense [for actions], doubt has corrupted his certitude.
6. Never make haste in reacting harshly and never be quick to punish when there is an alternative, for this causes depletion of the faith and brings closer the transformations [of blessing into calamity].
7. The quickest punishment is the punishment for transgression.
8. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has ordained punishment for committing sins against Him in order to save His servants from His chastisement.
9. The punishment of noble ones is better than the forgiveness of the vile ones.
10. The punishment of the hot tempered, spiteful and jealous people starts from [within] themselves.
11. The punishment of the intelligent is [in the form of] insinuation.
12. The punishment of the ignorant is [in the form of open] declaration.
13. There is no protector for one who is sought by Allah [for punishment].
14. Whoever punishes the one who is apologetic has committed a grave injustice.
15. One who punishes [a person] for [having committed] an offence has no merit.
16. Not every sinner deserves to be punished.
17. How repulsive is punishment [that is meted out] despite apology.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

Notes

1. Rather, the merit is in forgiving.

70. THE BODY

1. Serving the body is granting it whatever it seeks of pleasures and desires and what it covets, but in [all] this is the destruction of the soul.
2. Physical health is one of the most wholesome bounties.
3. How can one be deceived by the health of a body that is prone to malady?

71. ANTIPATHY

1. Beware of antipathy, for it corrupts brotherhood and makes one despised by Allah and the people.
2. Antipathy is a disgrace and sinning is [a cause of] destruction.
3. Antipathy spoils brotherhood.

72. LOFTINESS

1. When acts of kindness increase and forbearance becomes strong, loftiness is attained.

73. INTERCOURSE

1. He ('a) was asked about intercourse, so he said: [It is] shame that is lifted, loins that are joined and the closest thing to insanity. Persistence in it makes one senile and revival from it brings regret. When lawful, its fruit is a son who, if he lives, subjects [one] to trial and if he dies, causes sadness.

74. BEAUTY

1. External beauty is [in possessing] good looks.
2. Internal beauty is [in possessing] a good heart.
3. The beauty of a man is his clemency.
4. The beauty of a man is dignity.
5. Beauty of the freeman is [in] keeping away from dishonour.
6. The purity of beauty is [in] chastity.

75. THE BEAUTIFUL

1. One whose beautiful actions increase, the people unite in elevating him.

76. GROOMING

1. Grooming oneself is an apparent [form of] magnanimity.
2. Self-grooming is a characteristic of the believers.

77. MODERATION

1. Not everyone who is moderate in seeking [his livelihood] is deprived.

Notes

1. This is half of a sentence from letter no. 31 of Nahj al-Balāgha.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

78. PARADISE AND THE PEOPLE OF PARADISE

1. Paradise is the best place of return and hellfire is the worst place of residence.
2. Indeed, I have not seen any place whose seeker is in slumber like Paradise and any place whose fleer is in slumber like hellfire.
3. Verily the people of Paradise constitute all the believers who are easygoing and gentle.
4. Verily Allah, the Exalted, makes whomever He wishes, from those of his servants who possess sincere intentions and righteous hearts, enter Paradise.
5. Paradise is the abode of peace.
6. If you must be desirous of something, then be desirous of a Paradise, the span of which covers the heavens and the earth.
7. Paradise is the reward of the obedient.
8. Paradise is the abode of the pious.
9. Paradise is the goal of the foremost [in righteousness].
10. Paradise is the most excellent goal.
11. Paradise is the returning place of the victorious.
12. Paradise is the reward of every righteous believer.
13. Paradise is attained through keeping away from sins.
14. Verily you will not enter Paradise until you restrain yourself from misdeeds and stop [committing them]; and deter yourself from sins and desist [from them].
15. If you believe in Allah and abstain from what He has forbidden, He will put you in the Abode of Peace, and if you please Him, He will cover you with [divine] favour.
16. The price of Paradise is good deeds.
17. The price of Paradise is renunciation of the [pleasures of this] world.
18. The chiefs of the people of Paradise are the generous and the pious.
19. The chiefs of the people of Paradise are the sincere ones.
20. The chiefs of the people of Paradise are the God-fearing and the virtuous.
21. Seeking Paradise without good deeds is foolishness.
22. Paradise is not achieved [simply] by wishing for it.
23. Neither a swindler nor one who put others under obligation, will enter Paradise.
24. None will be victorious in attaining Paradise except one whose heart is good and intention sincere.
25. Every bliss other than Paradise is derisory.
26. None will be victorious in attaining Paradise except the one who works hard for it.
27. None shall attain Paradise except the one who struggles against his [lower] self.
28. One who yearns for Paradise forgets his [worldly] desires.
29. Paradise is attained through abstaining from sins.
30. One who shuns what is forbidden shall attain Paradise.
31. How impossible! Allah cannot be cheated of His Paradise, and none can attain what is with Him except by His pleasure.
32. The delegation that enters Paradise is constantly showered with blessings.
33. Those who enter Paradise are in perpetual bliss.

79. GENEROSITY

1. Generosity for the sake of Allah is the worship of those who are close [to Allah].
2. Generosity without fear or hope of recompense is true generosity.
3. Give generously and you will be honoured.
4. The most generous of you is the one who will gain the most.
5. The most excellent of noble traits is generosity.
6. The best generosity is to forgive after gaining the upper hand.
7. The greatest generosity is being open-handed with whatever is available.
8. The greatest generosity is delivering the rights to their [rightful] owners.
9. The greatest generosity is giving despite [facing] hard times.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

10. Generosity is [true] leadership, sovereignty is [only] administration.
11. Generosity is a present honour.
12. Generosity is the protector of honour.
13. The bane of generosity is poverty.
14. The bane of generosity is wastefulness.
15. Through generosity, authority is acquired.
16. Generosity stems from nobility of character.
17. Through generosity, men gain authority.
18. Through generosity, distinction is established and praise is acquired.
19. Be generous with whatever you have, [and] you will be praised.
20. Be generous and you will gain authority; be patient and you will be triumphant.
21. The generosity of the poor is the best generosity.
22. Be generous with what is available, fulfil your promises and be loyal with the trusts [that have been entrusted to you].
23. The generosity of a poor person dignifies him and the stinginess of a rich person debases him.
24. Be generous with that which perishes and you will be compensated for it with that which lasts.
25. Be generous for the sake of Allah and struggle against your selves in obedience to Him, He will [in return] magnify your reward and increase His favour upon you.
26. Generosity is the practice of the honourable.
27. The highest extent of generosity is giving [from] whatever is available.
28. One who is open-handed does good to others.
29. One who is generous gains authority.
30. One who does not show generosity is not praised.
31. How excellent is generosity when in straitened circumstances!
32. One who does not give generously while he is praised has to give away while he is dispraised.
33. One who does not give generously does not gain authority.
34. The generosity of a man endears him to his rivals and his stinginess makes him hated by his [own] children.

80. THE GENEROUS

1. The generous person is loved and praised, even if nothing of his generosity reaches his praiser, and the stingy person is the opposite of this.
2. The one who is generous is praised in this world and felicitous in the Hereafter.
3. Verily the masters of the people of this world (and the Hereafter) are the generous.
4. Be generous with the truth and miserly with falsehood.
5. Be [either] selflessly generous or moderate in giving but do not be from the third kind (i.e. the misers).

81. PROXIMITY TO ALLAH

1. One who is close to Allah is safe, while [one who is] His enemy is frightened.
2. Proximity to Allah is granted to those who obey Him and keep away from disobedience to Him.

82. NEIGHBOURS

- The worst of neighbours is the wicked neighbour.
- A wicked neighbour is the greatest adversity and the most serious tribulation.
- Be a neighbour to one from whose evil you are safe and whose goodness does not turn away from you.
- Ask about the neighbour before the house.
- Being a bad neighbour and offending the virtuous are the worst forms of vileness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

- One who is neighbourly gets many neighbours.
- One who is good to his neighbours gets many helpers.
- Taking care of one's neighbour is an act of magnanimity.

83. HUNGER

1. Hunger is better than the humiliation of subjugation.
2. Keeping oneself hungry is the most beneficial cure, whereas eating to one's fill increases maladies.
3. Hunger is better than subjugation.
4. Complement your food with hunger and discipline yourself with contentment.
5. The best condiment is hunger.
6. How good an assistant of piety hunger is!
7. How good an assistant in cutting down the [desires of the carnal] self and breaking its [bad] habits hunger is!

84. HIGH RANK

1. The alms-tax of high rank [and power] is benefitting others with it.
2. One of the obligations of a person who possesses a high rank is to use it to grant the [needs of] one who seeks from him.
3. One who benefits others with his high rank makes himself praiseworthy.

85. STRUGGLE (JIHAD)

1. Whoever makes an effort to strive in obedience to Allah and His messenger, his soul shall be safe and sound [from the torments of the Hereafter] and his transaction will be profitable and gainful.
2. The first thing which you overcome through Jihād is through striving with your hands, then [if this is not possible] by your tongue, then [if this is not possible] with your hearts; and the one who neither supports good with his heart nor censures evil, is turned upside down (i.e. will face the wrath of Allah).
3. Struggling [in the way of Allah] is the pillar of faith and the path of the felicitous.
4. The doors of the heavens are opened for those who strive [in the way of Allah].
5. If the people who came before me complained about the injustice of their rulers, then today I complain about the injustice of my people; it is as if I am led and they are the leaders, [and] I am restrained and they are the restrainers.
6. The reward for striving [in the way of Allah] is the greatest reward.
7. And [Allah has prescribed] Jihād as [a means of preserving the] honour of Islam.
8. Strong determination and lavishness do not go together.
9. The purification of the body is [in] striving and fasting.

86. STRUGGLING AGAINST THE SELF (JIHAD AN-NAFS)

1. Indeed Jihād is the price of Paradise, so the one who struggles against his self will acquire it, and this is the greatest reward of Allah for the one who is cognizant of it.
2. The best Jihād is the struggle of a man against his [carnal] soul.
3. The best Jihād is the struggle of the self against lustful desires, and its weaning away from the pleasures of this world.
4. The first thing that you disavow from Jihād is struggling against your selves.
5. The last things that you [should] lose are: the struggling against your selves and obedience to those who have authority among you.
6. Indeed the best Jihād is the struggle of a man against his [carnal] soul.
7. Verily struggling against the self restrains it from sins and protects it from destruction.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

8. Verily the one who struggles with his [lower] self, in obedience to Allah and against disobedience to Him, has the status of a virtuous martyr in the sight of Allah.
9. Indeed the one who struggles against his [lower] self, overcomes his anger and is careful in obeying [the commandments of] Allah, is raised by Allah, the Glorified, to the status of the one who fasts by day and stands in prayer by night, and is granted the rank of the patient soldier [who fights in His way].
10. Verily if you struggle against your [lower] self you will obtain the pleasure of Allah.
11. The fruit of struggle [against the self] is overpowering the self.
12. Struggling against the self is the dowry for Paradise.
13. Struggling against vain desires is the price of Paradise.
14. Struggling against the self is the best Jihad.
15. Struggle against your [lower] self and seek repentance, you will be successful in the obedience of your Lord.
16. Struggle against your vain desires, overcome your anger and resist your bad habits, [by this] your soul will become pure, your intellect will become perfect and the reward of your Lord will be complete.
17. Fight against your [lower] self in obedience to Allah the way an enemy would fight his enemy, and overpower it the way a rival would overpower his opponent, for indeed the strongest person is the one who subdues his self.
18. Struggle against your [lower] self and call it to account the way a partner would hold his partner accountable, and demand from it the right of Allah the way an adversary would demand from his foe, for verily the most felicitous of people is the one who undertakes to hold his self to account.
19. Struggling against the [lower] self is the price of Paradise, so the one who struggles against it will acquire it, and this is the greatest reward of Allah for the one who is cognizant of it.
20. Struggling against the self with knowledge is a symbol of intelligence.
21. Fighting anger with forbearance is evidence of nobility.
22. The most excellent Jihād is struggling against the self.
23. The highest form of struggle is for a man to struggle against his self.
24. It is sufficient for you, in your struggle against your [lower] self, that you always prevail over it and fight its vain desires.
25. One who fights his [lower] self perfects his piety.
26. One who knows his self struggles against it.
27. One who does not struggle against his self will not achieve victory.
28. There is no struggle more worthy than struggling against the self.
29. Struggling against the self is a trait of the noble ones.
30. Struggling against the self is a symbol of nobility.
31. Struggling against the self is the best Jihād.
32. There is no Jihād like struggle against the self.

87. IGNORANCE

1. Ignorance and miserliness are bad and harmful.
2. Ignorance in a human being is more harmful than gangrene [is] to the body.
3. Ignorance is a balky mount; whoever rides it stumbles and whoever accompanies it is led astray.
4. Ignorance of merits is one of the grossest demerits.
5. The greatest calamity is ignorance.
6. The worst ailment is ignorance.
7. The greatest ignorance is the ignorance of a person about himself.
8. The greatest ignorance is making enmity with the powerful, befriending the immoral and trusting the traitor.
9. Ignorance is a curse.
10. Ignorance is [a form of] death.
11. People are enemies of that which they are ignorant of.
12. Ignorance is the most harmful foe.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

13. Ignorance makes one stumble.
14. Ignorance spoils the Hereafter.
15. Ignorance is the [primary] source of evil.
16. Ignorance is an ailment and a chronic disease.
17. Ignorance attracts peril.
18. Ignorance is the root of all evil.
19. Ignorance is the worst disease.
20. Ignorance corrupts all matters.
21. Ignorance makes one stumble and brings regret.
22. Ignorance causes the living to die and perpetuates misery.
23. Verily you will not attain any goal by ignorance, nor will you achieve any goodness by means of it, nor will you realize any of your wishes in the Hereafter through it.
24. It is through ignorance that every evil is instigated.
25. Many an ignorance is better than forbearance (or knowledge).
26. Ward off ignorance with knowledge.
27. Too much ignorance is destructive.
28. The worst affliction is ignorance.
29. Counter ignorance with knowledge.
30. The outcome of ignorance is loss; and the joy of the envious does not last.
31. The pinnacle of ignorance is for a person to brag about his ignorance.
32. Many a revered person has been humiliated by his ignorance.
33. Ignorance suffices as ignobility.
34. It suffices as ignorance for a person to be ignorant about himself.
35. It suffices as ignorance for a person to be pleased with himself.
36. It suffices as ignorance for a person to laugh without [a reason for] amusement.
37. It suffices as ignorance for a person to be ignorant of his limits [and standing in society].
38. It suffices as ignorance for a person to be ignorant of his flaw.
39. It suffices as ignorance for a person to be ignorant about his own faults and to malign people for that which he [himself] cannot turn away from.
40. It suffices as ignorance for a person to forbid people from that which he performs himself.
41. The language of ignorance is impoliteness.
42. One who gets uplifted by ignorance has opposed the intellect.
43. One who fights his ignorance with his knowledge succeeds with the most felicitous victory.
44. Being overcome by ignorance is one of the severest afflictions.
45. There is no poverty like ignorance.
46. With ignorance, no path is purified.
47. There is no poverty more severe than ignorance.
48. There is no abomination more disgraceful than ignorance.
49. There is no adversity more severe than ignorance.
50. The cornerstone of ignorance is animosity towards people.

88. THE IGNORANT AND THE FOOLISH

1. An ignorant person is never found to be anything but falling short or excessive.
2. Neither does an ignorant restrain himself [from wrongdoing] nor does he benefit from good advice.
3. An ignorant person is one who obeys his vain desires in disobedience to his Lord.
4. The ignorant person feels aversion towards that which the wise person feels at ease with.
5. The ignorant person does not understand the learned because he [himself] was never learned before.
6. An ignorant person does not recognize his failure and does not accept the [good] advice given to him.
7. An ignorant person relies on his hopes and is negligent in his actions.
8. The ignorant person is like a rock through which water does not gush forth, and a tree, the branches of which do not become green, and a ground upon which foliage is not found.
9. An ignorant person is [like the] dead among the living.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

10. The most wretched of all people is the ignorant one.
11. An unremorseful sinner is the most ignorant person.
12. The most ignorant person is one who is deceived by the praise of a flatterer who makes the ugly look appealing to him and makes him hate the [sincere] adviser.
13. The most hated creature in the sight of Allah is the ignorant person, because He deprived him of what He bestowed on His creation, and that is intellect.
14. Verily the ignorant is one whose ignorance leads astray and whose vain desires entice [towards evil]; so his speech is unhealthy and his action is blameworthy.
15. The ignorant person inclines towards the one who is like him.
16. Man is an enemy of that which he is ignorant of.
17. The ignorant one does not restrain himself [from evil].
18. An ignorant person is a slave to his passions.
19. The ignorant person does not desist [from sinning].
20. An ignorant person seeks to raise himself but ends up abasing himself.
21. The ignorant person is one who is ignorant of his own capability.
22. An ignorant person is dead, even when he is alive.
23. The correctness of an ignorant person is like the mistake of a learned person (i.e. it happens rarely).
24. The ignorant person is deceived by [false] claims.
25. The ignorant person is one who is ignorant about his [own] affair.
26. The ignorant person is one who is deceived by his vain desires and his arrogance.
27. An ignorant person is one who takes his sincere advisor to be a deceiver.
28. When the ignorant one becomes stingy (or denies), he obtains [wealth] and when he obtains [wealth] (or professes belief in one God), he apostatizes.
29. Indeed the ignorant person is one who is enslaved by [worldly] pursuits.
30. When an ignorant person grows older, his ignorance rises.
31. The wealth of an ignorant person is in his worldly possessions and his hopes.
32. The reign of an ignorant person is like a stranger who [soon] moves to another place.
33. Many an ignorant person is saved by his ignorance.
34. The slip-ups of an ignorant person are excusable.
35. An ignorant king exposes his [own] flaws.
36. The worst person you can accompany is an ignorant one.
37. The correct [action] of an ignorant person is like the slip-up of an intelligent person.
38. The lost item of the ignorant person cannot be found.
39. Obedience to the foolish is a sign of ignorance.
40. Obedience to the foolish and being excessive [in speech or action] are two signs of ignorance.
41. The habit of the inexperienced [and ignorant] ones is to cut off the elements of favour.
42. The wealth of an ignorant person is in his worldly possessions.
43. The ignorant one is deceived by futile absurdities.
44. Every ignorant person is prone to temptation.
45. For the ignorant there is loss in every situation.
46. One who is ignorant is disregarded [by others].
47. When one is ignorant, his consideration is reduced.
48. One who is ignorant of [a branch of] knowledge is hostile towards it.
49. One who does not know where he is placing his foot, trips.
50. One who is ignorant makes many blunders.
51. One who is ignorant becomes self-conceited; and his 'today' is worse than his 'yesterday'.
52. It is from the nature of the ignorant to get angry quickly, in every situation.
53. No one antagonizes the learned like the ignorant [do].
54. Woe be to the one who persists in his ignorance and blessed is the one who realizes [his mistake] and finds the right course.
55. There is no independence for an ignorant person.
56. The ignorant one is not seen to be anything but immoderate (or excessive).
57. Nothing restrains the foolish except the edge of a sword.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

58. Disobey the ignorant and you will be safe.

Notes

1. Or, if taken in the context of Q68:6: Every ignorant person is demented.

89. HELL FIRE

1. Hell is sufficient as a punishment.
2. He ('a) said in his description of hell: [It is] a fire whose burning is intense, its roar is loud, its flames are rising, its blaze is incinerating, its groans are terrifying, its abatement is remote, its fuel is igniting, [and] its horrors are terrifying.
3. He ('a) said while describing hell: Its inmate cannot leave, its prisoner cannot be released by ransom and its shackles cannot be broken. This abode has no fixed age so that it may perish, nor is there a lifespan for its inmates that they may pass away.
4. Verily all disbelieving schemers are inmates of the fire.
5. He ('a) also said in his description of hellfire: Its pits are engulfed [with fire], its sides are pitch-dark, its vessels are scorching hot and everything about it is horrid.
6. None will be saved from the fire of hell except the one who abandons its actions (i.e. the actions that lead to it).
7. This tender skin does not have the tolerance to withstand the fire [of hell].
8. One who is afraid of hellfire keeps away from that which has been forbidden.
9. The inmates of hell are eternally tormented.
10. The one who enters hellfire is forever wretched.
11. The fuel of hellfire on the Day of Judgment will comprise of every rich person who was miserly towards the poor with his wealth and every learned scholar who sold his Hereafter for the world.
12. Be wary of the fire whose heat is intense, whose pit is deep and whose ornaments are made of [molten] iron.
13. Be wary of the fire whose tumultuous blaze is ready, its flames are intense and its torment is forever renewed.
14. Hellfire is the final end of the extremists.

90. LOVERS OF THE AHLULBAYT

1. Whoever loves us with his heart, supports us with his speech and fights our enemies with his sword, then he will be with us in Paradise at our stage.
2. Whoever loves us with his heart and supports us with his speech but does not fight alongside us with his hand, then he will be in Paradise but not at our stage.
3. Whoever loves us with his heart but pretends to hate us with his tongue will go to Paradise.
4. He who loves us should emulate our actions and clothe himself with piety.
5. One who loves us should prepare to be covered with afflictions.
6. One who befriends us should have a thick skin for tribulations [that will befall him].
7. Two types of people are destroyed because of me: the fanatic lover and the extreme hater.
8. If a mountain loved me, it would crumble.

91. THE BELOVED

1. Losing a loved one leads to forlornness.
2. One who loves you forbids you [from evil].
3. One who loves something speaks about it constantly.
4. Indeed only he who does not flatter you loves you, and only he who does not let you hear [his praise] praises you.
5. Let the most beloved person to you and the one who has the greatest status in your eyes be the one who strives hardest in benefiting people.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

6. Let the most beloved person to you be the compassionate adviser.

92. EVIDENCE

1. The strength of the authority of evidence is stronger than the strength of the authority of force.

93. THE PROOF (OF ALLAH)

1. Allah, the Glorified, never leaves His servants without a necessary proof or an established, clear path.
2. Allah, the Glorified, does not leave His creation unheeded, nor does He neglect their affairs.
3. Allah, the Glorified, never lets His servants remain without a divinely appointed Prophet or a revealed book [to guide them].

94. THE DISPROVED

1. One who is disproved has no right.

95. THE ONE WHO PRESENTS AN ARGUMENT

1. The one who presents a strong argument may get support.
2. One who argues by truth, succeeds.

96. THE HAJJ

1. The Hajj is a means of strengthening the religion.

97. RAGE

1. Rage is a bout of insanity because its possessor regrets [afterwards], but if he does not feel regret, then his insanity is firmly established.
2. Repel [your] rage, think about the proof and protect yourself from nonsense - you will be safe from slip-ups.

98. THE CAUTIOUS

1. One who is overly cautious may be destroyed.
2. Harm comes to the cautious one from his [own] place of security.

99. THE WARNER

1. One who warns you is like the one who brings you glad tidings.

100. WAR, SOLDIERS AND ARMIES

1. Soldiers [who fight for Islam] are the glory of religion and the bastions of [its] leaders.
2. Fleeing at the right moment is equivalent to victory in its time.
3. Soldiers are defenders of the people.
4. The bane of an army is opposing its commanders.
5. One who abandons his army has helped his adversaries.
6. Cast down your gaze in battles, for this will make you calmer and cause your hearts to be more tranquil.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Put the armoured man forward and the unarmoured one behind, and grit your teeth because this will make the swords skip off the skulls.
8. He who is frightened by what is in front of him retreats [and flees].
9. Defend [yourselves] with the edge of blades, charge forward [against the enemy] with your swords, give up your lives [for the sake of Allah] and walk towards death with calm.
10. By the one who splits the seed and creates the human being! They did not accept Islam, rather they succumbed to it [to remain safe] and hid their disbelief; and when they found supporters for it, they brought forth in the open that which they had hidden and made manifest that which they had concealed.
11. I swear by Allah! Even if you run away from the sword of this transitory world you will not be safe from the swords of the Hereafter. You are the foremost among the Arabs and the greatest figures [of the community], so be ashamed of fleeing [from the battlefield], for certainly in it is a covering of disgrace and [a cause of] entry into hellfire.
12. Do not fight against the one who seeks refuge in religion, for one who combats religion is ruined.
13. Do not combat the one who seeks the support of truth, for the one who fights the truth is [always] defeated.
14. Never seek to challenge anyone in combat, but if you are challenged, then respond; for the one who seeks it is an aggressor, and the aggressor is struck down.
15. Do not let the fleeing which is followed by return and the retreat that is followed by attack bear down on you. Give the swords their due right and prepare a place for the fallen [soldiers]. Embolden yourselves to charge with intensity and strike with full force, and silence the voices, as this dispels cowardice.
16. Keep on enduring and remain firm, until the pillar of truth illuminates upon you while you have the upper hand, and Allah is with you, and never will He stint [the reward of] your deeds.
17. Defend your religion with the edge of blades, charge forward [against the enemy] with your swords and seek the help of Allah you will gain victory and [His] assistance.
18. Give up your lives [for the sake of Allah] willingly and walk towards death with ease.
19. The survivors of war grow larger in number and have more children.
20. Many a war is more beneficial than peace.
21. Sometimes you may be attacked from within your sanctuary.
22. The best of arsenals is seeking support [from Allah].
23. Verily in fleeing [from the battlefield] there is the wrath of Allah, the Glorified, persistent disgrace and lasting shame; and certainly one who flees does not prolong his life, nor does he delay his day [of death].
24. Your intellects have decreased and your judgments have become fatuous. You are thus targets for the archer, morsels for the eater and easy prey for the hunter.
25. Keep returning to fight and be ashamed of fleeing [from the battlefield], for it is a disgrace for the progenies and [a cause of entry into] hellfire on the Day of Reckoning.
26. Grit your back teeth, for this makes the swords skip off the skull.
27. Fleeing [from the battle field] is one of the two humiliations.
28. Be ashamed of fleeing [from battle], for it is a disgrace for the progenies and [a cause of entry into] hellfire on the Day of Reckoning.
29. Twist the sides of the spears [while attacking], for this makes the spearheads move with more force.

Notes

1. Indicating seriousness in battle.

101. WAGING WAR

1. One who opposes Allah is crushed.
2. One who fights against Allah is ruined.
3. Indeed, if you fight against Allah, you will be defeated and destroyed.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. One who fights against the people will be fought and one who considers himself to be safe from plunder will be plundered.

102. FREEDOM AND THE FREE

1. The freeman is free even if hardship befalls him.
2. Liberty is free of malice and deception.
3. Sometimes the free man may be treated unjustly.
4. The free man will never become enslaved until distress is removed from him.
5. There is no reward for the free except honour [and respect].
6. Do not be a slave to others while Allah, the Glorified, has made you free, for that which is good is never achieved except by overcoming evil, and ease is never acquired except through difficulty.

103. THE CAREFUL

1. One who is [overly] careful [not to put himself in any harm] is thrown [into it].
2. One whose carefulness increases, his unseen [future] becomes sound.

104. GREED

1. Greed is a disgrace and a humiliation for the one who espouses it.
2. Greed is the cornerstone of poverty and the foundation of evil.
3. Greed is one of the two miseries.
4. Greed, gluttony and stinginess are the result of ignorance.
5. Greed does not increase sustenance, rather it debases one's status.
6. Take revenge on your greed through contentment, just as you would avenge your enemy by retaliation.
7. Be cautious of greed, for its possessor is subject to humiliation and suffering.
8. Be wary of greed, for it is a disgrace to the religion and the worst companion.
9. Verily in greed there is suffering.
10. Greed is the riding mount of hardship.
11. Greed is a sign of penury.
12. Greed has blameworthy consequences.
13. Greed is a symbol of the wretched.
14. Greed is [a trait that leads to] disgrace and suffering.
15. Greed corrupts conviction.
16. Greed humiliates and causes misery.
17. Greed is [a trait that results in] endless suffering.
18. Greed degrades magnanimity.
19. Greed leads to many flaws (or great sins).
20. Greed and gluttony earn wretchedness and humiliation.
21. Greed diminishes the status of a man and does not increase his sustenance.
22. Verily you cannot outrun your death, nor acquire that which is not for you, so why do you debase yourself O wretched one?!
23. It is through greed that hardship comes about.
24. The worst companion is greed.
25. The fruit of greed is hardship.
26. The fruit of greed is anguish.
27. Shunning greed severs gluttony and cupidity.
28. Intense greed comes from strong gluttony and weakness of faith.
29. Counter greed with contentment.
30. Yielding to greed corrupts certitude.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

31. It is on doubt and lack of trust in Allah that greed and avarice are based.
32. The slave of greed is eternally wretched.
33. In greed there is hardship.
34. In greed there is misery and anguish.
35. Greed has been paired up with hardship.
36. Greed [is a mount that] kills its rider.
37. Reduce your greed and remain [satisfied] with what has been allocated to you of your sustenance, [by this] you will protect your faith.
38. How can there be relief from the suffering of greed for one who has not truly trusted [in Allah]?
39. Too much greed makes its possessor miserable and abases him.
40. Not everyone who seeks, finds and not everyone who turns away, loses.
41. One who is greedy becomes wretched and undergoes hardship.
42. One whose greed increases, his status is lowered.
43. One who clothes himself with greed becomes poverty-stricken.
44. One whose greed increases, his certitude decreases.
45. One who is overcome by greed faces great humiliation.
46. Nothing debases the self like greed and nothing disgraces [one's] honour like stinginess.
47. How much agony is brought about by greed!
48. One who acts greedily is wretched and dispraised.
49. Do not let greed overpower your patience.
50. There is no [good] health with gluttony.
51. A little greed leads to a lot of cupidity.

105. THE GREEDY

1. The one who is greedy is poor, even if he owns the whole world in its entirety.
2. The greedy one is [always] weary.
3. The greedy one is never satisfied.
4. The greedy person is a slave to [his] desires.
5. The greedy person toils for that which will harm him.
6. The glutton is never satisfied.
7. The greedy one is a prisoner of disgrace, never to be freed from his prison.
8. If you are greedy in your desire for that which has been guaranteed to you (i.e. your sustenance) then be avid in performing that which has been made incumbent upon you.
9. Many a greedy person has been killed by his greed.
10. I wonder at the one who knows that Allah has guaranteed sustenance and allotted it, and that his effort will not increase what has [already] been allotted for him of it, yet he is greedy and unrelenting in his desire for [more] wealth.
11. Every greedy person is needy.
12. Many a greedy person has been frustrated and many a contented person has not been disappointed!
13. There is no adequacy for a greedy person.
14. One who acts greedily is not bereft of indignity.
15. One whose greed increases, his wretchedness [also] increases.
16. One for whom greed of worldly possessions is coupled with stinginess has held fast to the two pillars of ignobility.
17. A greedy person has no shame.
18. A greedy person is never found relaxing.
19. Nothing makes one amass wealth except greed, and the greedy is wretched and dispraised.

106. VOCATION

1. The vocation [one undertakes] is based on the extent of deprivation.
2. A [simple] vocation with modesty is better than affluence with immorality.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

Notes

1. Another meaning could be: To the extent of deprivation there is reward.

107. THE PROHIBITED

1. The prohibited is illicit.

108. DEPRIVATION AND FRUSTRATION

1. Deprivation is abandonment.
2. I wonder at the person who hopes for favour from the one who is above him, how can he deprive the one who is below him [of his own favour]?
3. The anguish of deprivation will not be calmed until acquisition is realized.
4. Do not deprive the distressed even if he is extravagant.
5. Do not frustrate the needy even if he insists [for more].

109. THE PARTY OF ALLAH

1. Would you like to be among the victorious party of Allah? [Then] fear Allah, the Glorified, and be righteous in all your affairs, for surely Allah is with those who guard [against evil] and those who go good [to others].

110. JUDICIOUSNESS

1. Judiciousness means enduring agony until the opportunity [to react] avails itself.
2. The last sources of self-preservation are the first points of caution.
3. Judiciousness is considering the consequences [of actions] and consulting the wise.
4. Indeed, the one who gets involved in matters without thinking about the consequences is vulnerable to grave calamities.
5. The root of determination is judiciousness, and its fruit is victory.
6. Judiciousness is a provision and negligence is a loss.
7. Judiciousness is a skill.
8. Judiciousness is [having] the most pertinent of views.
9. Judiciousness is preserving the [lessons learned through] experience.
10. Judiciousness is [achieved] through weighing the opinions thoroughly.
11. Judiciousness is being extremely cautious.
12. Views are many but foresight is little.
13. Judiciousness is safeguarding that which you have been charged with and leaving that which has been guaranteed for you.
14. Tranquillity before [gaining] awareness [of the situation] is contrary to judiciousness.
15. Verily judiciousness is only in obedience to Allah and disobedience to the [lower] self.
16. The bane of judiciousness is losing the matter.
17. When judiciousness is coupled with determination, felicity becomes complete.
18. The fruit of judiciousness is wellbeing.
19. Act with judiciousness and cling to knowledge your results will be praiseworthy.
20. The end result of judiciousness is precaution.
21. The perfection of judiciousness is seeking to reform [one's] opponents and being amicable with [one's] enemies.
22. One who opposes judiciousness is destroyed.
23. One who acts judiciously is cautious.
24. One who fails to act with judiciousness is reckless.
25. One whose judiciousness is reduced, his determination is weakened.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

26. One who is not pushed forward by judiciousness is held back by impuissance.
27. From judiciousness comes strong determination.
28. From judiciousness comes preparedness and readiness.
29. Preserving [the lessons learnt from] experience is from judiciousness.
30. Genuine determination comes from judiciousness.
31. Stopping [and assessing the situation] when faced with doubt is part of judiciousness.
32. From the excellence of judiciousness is being prepared to move and being ready to travel [from this world to the next].

111. THE JUDICIOUS

1. The judicious person is one who does not get too preoccupied with the blessing [he has been given] to work for his afterlife.
2. The judicious person is one who is generous with what he has in his possession and does not postpone his work of today to tomorrow.
3. The judicious person is one who is not too preoccupied with the deceptions of his world to work for his Hereafter.
4. The judicious person is one who is amicable with [the people of] his time.
5. The judicious person is one who has been made worldly-wise by experience and refined by calamities.
6. The judicious person is one who gives thanks for blessings that come to him and is patient and thinks no more of it when the blessings turn away or turn back from him.
7. The judicious person is one who delays meting out punishment when [he is] under the yoke of anger and expedites the repayment of favours by taking advantage of the available opportunity.
8. The most judicious of you is the most abstemious of you [from worldly pleasures].
9. The most judicious of all people is one who deems his worldly affairs to be unimportant.
10. The most judicious of people is the one who presumes his inability despite having numerous supporters.
11. The most judicious of people is the one whose inner and outer garments are patience and consideration of the consequences [of his actions].
12. The most judicious of people is the one who fulfils his promise and does not postpone his work of today to tomorrow.
13. Indeed the judicious person is one who does not get beguiled by deceptions.
14. Verily the judicious person is one who occupies himself with struggling against his [lower] self, thereby rectifying it and preventing it from indulging in its vain desires and pleasures, thus he attains mastery over it; and verily for the intelligent one there is a preoccupation in keeping himself away from [that which is impermissible of] this world, its contents and its people.
15. Verily the judicious person is one who restrains his [lower] self by taking it to account, and controls it with rage (or by overcoming it), and kills it by fighting against it.
16. The judicious one is alert, the negligent one is sleepy.
17. The judicious person is one who does not harm others.
18. The judicious person is one who discards [excessive] expenses and luxuries.
19. The judicious person is one who abandons this world for the sake of the Hereafter.
20. The judicious is one who eschews extravagance and loathes waste.
21. Only he is judicious whose preoccupation is entirely with himself, whose concern is entirely for his religion, and whose struggle is entirely for his Hereafter.
22. Many a young person is more judicious than an old person.
23. The weapon of a judicious person is precaution.
24. In every action of the judicious person, there is merit.
25. The intellect of the judicious one acts as a deterrent from every demerit.
26. The judicious one does not become perplexed in times of adversity.
27. He who does not give generously from what he has and does not advance (or save) his work of today for his morrow is not a judicious person.
28. The judicious person never dispenses with a pertinent and superior opinion.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

Notes

1. Meaning that he does not work in this world for his Hereafter.

112. GRIEF FOR WHAT HAS BEEN LOST

1. Do not grieve for that which is lost.

113. THE RECKONING

1. The reckoning is before the punishment and the reward is after the reckoning.

114. HIGH REGARD

1. There is no beauty like high regard.

115. JEALOUSY

1. Jealousy is one of the two torments.
2. Jealousy is the viler of the two depravities.
3. Jealousy is an incurable disease, it does not end except by the destruction of the envier or the death of the envied.
4. Jealousy eats away good deeds just like fire consumes firewood.
5. Jealousy is a shameful flaw and a gross deficiency; one who possesses it is not cured except by realizing his hopes about the one whom he envies.
6. Be cautious of jealousy, for it disparages the self.
7. Be wary of jealousy for it is the worst quality, the ugliest attribute and the trait of the Devil.
8. Jealousy is stressful.
9. Jealousy is the worst of diseases.
10. Jealousy is imprisonment of the soul.
11. Jealousy is the principal of [all] flaws.
12. Jealousy makes life miserable.
13. Jealousy emaciates (and exhausts) the body.
14. Jealousy melts away the body.
15. Jealousy gives rise to depression.
16. Jealousy is the great trap of the Devil.
17. Jealousy is an ailment that cannot be cured.
18. Jealousy is the habitude of the vile ones and the enemies of fortunes.
19. When jealousy between the people rains, corruption grows.
20. The fruit of jealousy is wretchedness in this world and the Hereafter.
21. Shun jealousy, dishonesty and malice, for indeed these three [characteristics] disgrace the religion and destroy the person [who possesses them].
22. The cornerstone of [all] depravities is jealousy.
23. The cause of depression is jealousy.
24. The weapon of ignobility is jealousy.
25. The worst thing that can accompany a person is jealousy.
26. Purify your hearts of jealousy, for it is a depressing enfeeblener.
27. Just as rust corrodes iron until it causes it to waste away, so too does jealousy corrode the body until it wears away.
28. Jealousy is not from the characteristics of the God-wary.
29. Jealousy towards a friend for the blessing [he has been endowed with] stems from low self-esteem.
30. Woe be to jealousy, how fair it is! It starts off with its companion and then kills him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

31. Do not be jealous of each other, for jealousy eats away the faith like fire consumes firewood; and do not have hatred for one another for this is severing [for the faith].
32. There is no malady like jealousy.

Notes

1. Or from weakness and lack of resolve

116. THE JEALOUS

1. Happiness does not last for the jealous and the spiteful.
2. The jealous one is always ill and the miser is always abased.
3. The jealous one is always sick, even when his body is healthy.
4. The jealous person is always ill.
5. The jealous one is never cured.
6. The jealous one never gains authority.
7. The jealous one is angry at destiny.
8. The jealous one has many regrets and his sins are multiplied.
9. When blessings are [openly] displayed, the enviers increase.
10. I am amazed at the heedlessness of the jealous about the health of their bodies.
11. The jealous one has no friendship.
12. One whose jealousy increases, his depression becomes prolonged.
13. How little comfort the jealous person has!
14. Because of the favour of Allah upon you, do not be jealous.
15. There is no comfort for the jealous.
16. The jealous person will never be found happy.
17. A believer is never jealous.
18. No life is more miserable than the life of the jealous and the spiteful.
19. The jealous person is never pleased with the one whom he is jealous of except by [his] death or cessation of the blessing.
20. It is a consolation for you that the one who is jealous of you becomes furious when you are happy.
21. For the jealous one, there is no friendship.
22. For the jealous one, there is no cure.
23. The jealous person considers the cessation of a blessing from the person whom he envies to be a blessing upon himself.
24. It is amazing how heedless the jealous are of the health of the bodies!
25. The jealous person displays his affection in his words and hides his hatred in his actions; he has the title of a friend and the attribute of an enemy.
26. The jealous one is happy with disaster [befalling others] and saddened by [their] happiness.
27. Nothing cures the jealous one but cessation of the blessing.

117. THE ENVIED

1. Every person of high rank is envied.

118. THE SWORD AND THE STEED

1. At times even a good steed may stumble.
2. At times the [sharp] sword becomes blunt.

119. GOOD DEEDS

1. Acquiring of good deeds is one of the best of earnings.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. For every good deed there is recompense.
3. In every good deed there is reward.
4. Every good deed which is not done with the intention of seeking nearness to Allah, has the ugliness of ostentation in it and its fruit is an ugly requital.

120. GOOD TURNS AND BENEVOLENT ACTIONS

1. Showing kindness to the enemy is one of the two triumphs.
2. Following up one favour with another favour is from the perfection of munificence.
3. Doing good is the nature of the righteous and doing evil is the nature of the wicked.
4. Benevolence from the wicked corrupts just as much as it reforms from the honourable.
5. If a righteous act is not nurtured, it wears away, just like worn out garments and dilapidated buildings.
6. Do good and you shall enthrall.
7. Bestow goodness and you shall advance.
8. Do good and you will be thanked.
9. Forget your gift, [and] remember your promise.
10. Give and you shall become capable (or be chosen).
11. Give generously and you shall gain authority.
12. Confer favours and you will be praised.
13. Extend your goodness and do no harm.
14. Be good [to others] and good will be done to you.
15. Be good to the evildoer and you will dominate him.
16. Bestow favours on the people and your status will increase.
17. Show kindness to whomever you wish and you will become his master.
18. Confer favours and you will be thanked, fear [Allah] and you will be feared [by the people] and do not crack [silly] jokes such that you are belittled.
19. Seize the opportunity to perform righteous deeds and be careful of your obligations towards your brothers.
20. Start by giving the one who has not asked you, and extend your favour to the one who has sought it, and be cautious never to turn away a beggar.
21. Donate your wealth generously towards righteous works and support your friend[s] with it, for indeed generosity is a more befitting trait for the free.
22. Do good to the one who is under your authority and the one under whose authority you are will do good to you.
23. The best faith is [that which is accompanied by] righteousness.
24. The best favours are those that correspond with divinely ordained laws.
25. The best act is that which benefits the pious ones.
26. The best act is that which benefits those who are deserving of it.
27. The merit of a righteous action is better than the action [itself].
28. The greatest righteous act is establishing ties with near relatives.
29. The most beautiful act of a person in a position of power is conferring of favours [to those under him].
30. The best treasure is a free man who has been reserved [in your friendship because of your kindness to him].
31. The greatest good deed is supporting one's brothers [financially].
32. The best gift is forgoing obligation.
33. The noblest of favours are the good turns of the munificent [and honourable] ones.
34. The most worthy of giving [to] is the one who feels the least in need of asking [from others].
35. The best grant is that which is given before it is sought.
36. The most pleasing kindness is offering [something] without being asked [for it].
37. The best grant is that which is [bestowed] before the humility of having to ask [for it].
38. The best of all people who have preceded you is the one who has preceded you in his good expectation of you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

39. The most worthy of favour among the people is one who is patient when he is put off, excuses when he is denied and shows gratitude when he is given.
40. Of all people, the most worthy of doing good to others is the one upon whom Allah has bestowed favours and granted with the ability [to do good to others].
41. The most worthy of bestowing favours [to others] is the one upon whom numerous favours of Allah have been bestowed.
42. Verily the good act that brings reward quickest is the act of kindness.
43. Verily giving away this wealth is an acquisition [for the Hereafter] and withholding it is an affliction.
44. Verily spending this wealth in obedience to Allah is the greatest blessing and spending it in disobedience to Him is the greatest tribulation.
45. Indeed extending greetings is from sublime morals.
46. Verily Allah, the Glorified, loves everyone who is open-handed and strong in faith.
47. Verily the value of asking is greater than the worth of what is given, so do not regard that which you give as much, for it will never be equal to the humiliation of asking.
48. Verily the little that is from Allah, the Glorified, is more valuable than the plenty [that is gotten] from His creatures.
49. Verily the good turn that you did to one of the people was only a means to ennoble yourself and embellish your honour, so do not seek gratitude from others for that which you did for yourself.
50. Indeed your goodness towards the ones who plots against you from your opponents and enviers is more irritating for them than your trying to do them harm, and it is [also] a means of inviting them to reform [themselves].
51. Verily your munificence does not extend to all of the creation, so aim it towards the noblest of creation.
52. It is not from the practice of the virtuous to delay the bestowal of favours.
53. Benevolence is authority.
54. Benevolence is distinction.
55. Kindness is [a cause of] love.
56. Benevolent acts are loans.
57. Doing good [to others] is beneficial.
58. Benevolence is merit, munificence is nobility.
59. Benevolence is a treasure.
60. The human being is a slave of kindness.
61. Benevolence is the alms-tax for blessings.
62. Benevolent acts are the best booty.
63. Kindness is the pinnacle of excellence.
64. Kindness enslaves (or enthrals) human beings.
65. Benevolence is the most honourable authority.
66. The evil deed is erased by a benevolent act.
67. Merit is [acquired] with benevolence.
68. Conferring favours is the most excellent munificence.
69. Benevolence is an everlasting reserve.
70. Kindness is a treasure and the munificent is one who obtains it.
71. People are the followers of what they deem to be good.
72. The good turn done by an intelligent (or an honourable) person is most excellent [in] merit.
73. The favour of an ignoble person is the worst depravity.
74. Rewarding good with evil is [the highest form of] ingratitude.
75. Benevolence is the most thriving cultivation and the best treasure.
76. Doing good to the one who offends you is the most excellent merit.
77. A benevolent act is sullied by repeatedly putting one under obligation through it.
78. Doing good to the honourable ones is the best provision and the noblest deed.
79. Doing good to the one who offends [you] reforms the enemy.
80. Benevolence is a treasure so consider whom you are leaving it with.
81. Righteous work is a provision, so be wary of whom you are placing it with.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

82. If you confer favours, you will be served.
83. Verily if you do good [to others] then you are [actually] honouring your own soul and doing good to it.
84. Verily you are more in need of doing good to the people than of accumulating wealth.
85. The bane of giving is procrastination.
86. When you perform a good turn then conceal it.
87. When a good turn has been done to you then publicize it.
88. When you [wish to] give, be quick.
89. When a good turn is done to you, recall it.
90. When you do a good turn [to someone], forget it.
91. If you do good to a vile person, he will wrong you in return for your goodness to him.
92. I am free to choose with regards to the one upon whom I have not bestowed any favour but am bound to complete my favour on the one upon whom I have bestowed it; for if I complete it, I will have preserved it and if I cut it off then I will have lost it, and if I lose it then why did I embark on it [in the first place]?
93. If your bounty falls short of reaching the weak, then [at least] let your mercy reach them.
94. If you find from the needy people one who will carry your provision for you up to the Day of Resurrection and return it to you tomorrow when you need it most, then take the opportunity and give it to him, and increase the provisions that you give him [to carry for you] while you are able to, for it is possible that you may [at one time] seek him but not find him.
95. Through kindness, human beings are enslaved.
96. Through benevolence, gratitude lasts.
97. Through kindness, hearts are owned.
98. Through kindness, freemen are owned.
99. Through kindness and covering faults with forgiveness, eminence increases.
100. Through kindness, people are enthralled.
101. Giving generously is the alms-tax of blessings.
102. Extending the hand in giving is the most beautiful virtue and the most excellent trait.
103. Stretching out the hand in giving increases reward and multiplies recompense.
104. Expediting good turns is the basis of righteousness.
105. Wasting benevolence is showing it to someone who does not comprehend [its value].
106. Do good [to people] and you will be served; be forbearing (or gain knowledge) and you will advance.
107. The completion of benevolence is abandoning [putting one under] obligation by it.
108. The peoples' expectation of your kindness is better than their fear of your retribution.
109. Adorn yourselves by taking up kindness, stopping transgression, acting upon the truth, being just and impartial, keeping away from corruption and improving your Hereafter.
110. The beauty of benevolence is [in] relinquishing obligation.
111. The beauty of a benevolent act is in completing it.
112. Denying a favour instigates the ugliness of obligation.
113. Denying the benevolence [of others] leads to deprivation.
114. The best good turn is one that benefits the righteous.
115. The best benevolent act is one that is neither preceded by delay nor followed by obligation.
116. The best grant is that which is [given] without being sought.
117. Act with kindness towards your enemy for this is one of the two triumphs.
118. Whoever bestows favours on others, they are thankful for his authority.
119. Whoever shows benevolence, his habit is praised.
120. The pinnacle of kindness is being kind to the believers.
121. The pinnacle of generosity is being expeditious in giving.
122. The pinnacle of faith is doing good to people.
123. The pinnacle of excellence is doing good to the virtuous.
124. The pinnacle of depravity is doing good to the wicked.
125. Nurturing a good turn is better than starting it.
126. Increase your benevolent acts and bestow more favours, for this is a more lasting provision and a more beautiful legacy.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

127. The cause of affection is benevolence.
128. Continuous bestowal [of favours] is the practice of the honourable.
129. Ask for good from one who forgets it and do good to the one who recalls it.
130. The worst grant is that which is preceded by delay and followed by obligation.
131. Performing benevolent actions protects one from falling into disgrace.
132. Doing good turns is from the merits of the human being.
133. Performing benevolent actions causes the abundant flow of blessings and wards off calamity.
134. The good turn of wealth ceases with its cessation.
135. Blessed is the one who does good to the servants [of Allah] and prepares provisions for the Hereafter.
136. He who does a good turn to those who are undeserving of it has oppressed it.
137. The one who confers his favours to the honourable ones acquires the most sublime gains.
138. Espouse kindness, for it is the best cultivation and the most profitable merchandise.
139. Be good to the servants [of Allah] and act justly in the lands, [by this] you will save when the witnesses are presented [on the Day of Judgment].
140. Perform benevolent works, for they are the best provisions for the Hereafter.
141. Perform benevolent acts and do good to your near relatives and neighbours, for these two actions prolong life and make the lands prosper.
142. By successive acts of kindness and benevolence, the free man is enslaved.
143. The habit of benevolence is the source of capability [or power].
144. I am amazed at the one who buys slaves with his wealth, how can he not buy the freemen with his benevolence, thereby enthralling them.
145. In every [act of] benevolence there is kindness.
146. In every good turn there is indebtedness.
147. Sometimes it is better to give in order to fulfil a promise [and not delay it].
148. Send your good turn ahead [for the Hereafter] and you will benefit.
149. Every [form of] benevolence is a favour.
150. How many a human being has been enslaved by benevolence!
151. Increased rendering of benevolent works prolongs life and spreads renown.
152. Doing a lot of good turns raises one's honour and makes gratitude last.
153. The guarantee of continued affluence and capability [and power] is [in] following up one favour with another favour.
154. Everything has a merit and the merit of the honourable ones is doing good to the people.
155. Let your traits be generosity and benevolence.
156. One cannot show gratitude for blessings in a better way than using them to benefit others.
157. If you were to see benevolence in the form a person, you would surely see him as a beautiful form that surpasses the worlds [in its beauty].
158. One who bestows goodness [to others] is served [by them].
159. One who generously gives [from] his wealth becomes great.
160. One who bestows favours fulfils the right of authority.
161. One who puts others under obligation for his favour, spoils it.
162. One who extends his goodness [to the people] deserves leadership.
163. One who renders a beautiful deed acquires great praise.
164. One who performs a benevolent action gains reward and gratitude.
165. One who cuts off his usual favours, Allah will cut off his present capabilities.
166. One who does not bestow favours will not achieve nobility.
167. One who does not give while he is sitting [in comfort] will not be given when he is standing [in a state of struggle].
168. One who does not give while he is sitting [in ease] will be deprived when he is standing [in adversity].
169. One who favours an ignorant person demonstrates the extent of his own ignorance.
170. One who conceals the favour [that has been done to him] is punished with deprivation.
171. One who withholds favours is stripped of [his] ability.
172. One who does good to a freeman gains a [great] reward.
173. One who does a kind act earns good praise.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

174. One whose benefactions are abundant demonstrates his great nobility.
175. One whose kindness is abundant is loved by his brothers.
176. Whoever extends his goodness [to others], more people are inclined towards him.
177. One who accepts your gift has [actually] assisted you in gaining honour.
178. One who perfects his kindness gives generously before he is asked.
179. One who does good to the undeserving has wronged his goodness.
180. One who gives in cases that are undeserving fails to give [the rights] to those who are deserving.
181. One who is ungrateful for a good turn deserves an ugly separation.
182. One who reciprocates a good turn with a better one has [appropriately] repaid it.
183. One whose benefaction increases, his assistants and helpers [also] increase.
184. Whoever extends his benevolence [to others], the hearts become inclined towards him.
185. One who grants generously before being asked, then he is truly honourable and much-loved.
186. One who repays goodness with evil has rid himself of magnanimity.
187. Whoever does good to the people, their love for him lasts.
188. One who fulfils the [debt of] goodness that was done to him in the past has attained true freedom.
189. One who turns to you hopefully has already got a good impression of you, so do not disappoint his expectation.
190. Whoever fulfils the rights of one who does not fulfil his rights has enslaved him.
191. One who is kind to the people, his outcomes become good and the ways [to his goals] become easy for him.
192. Whoever accepts a good turn has made the one who rendered it to him his master.
193. One who accepts your good turn has made his right over you mandatory [on himself].
194. Whoever does good to the one who does evil to him has taken the all-encompassing excellence.
195. One who is not grateful for favours is not spared from deprivation.
196. One who begins giving without being asked and completes good deeds without any obligation has perfected his favour.
197. One who bestows a favour on the ungrateful one prolongs his rage.
198. One who is generous in granting [favours], enthrals the people of this world.
199. One who does not nurture his good turn has indeed lost it.
200. One who accepts your good turn has sold you his honour and magnanimity.
201. One who accepts your good turn has humbled his prestige and honour before you.
202. Whoever does not nurture his favour, then it is as if he did not bestow it.
203. Doing good to others is part of an honourable purpose.
204. One of the greatest afflictions is wasting good turns [on the undeserving].
205. One of the best favours is the favour that is done to the righteous.
206. Nothing earns gratitude like doing good to others.
207. Nothing enthrals people like doing [them] favours.
208. No one has appealed to me with an intercession that is greater in my sight than a favour that I had previously done to him, so that I may nurture it and follow it up with another [favour] like it; for indeed later refusals cut off the gratitude for earlier favours.
209. The basis of goodness is abandoning obligation through it.
210. With goodness [to others], there is loftiness.
211. Nurturing a good turn [and completing it] is better than starting it [anew].
212. How good a store [for the future] benevolence is!
213. The best provision for the Hereafter is doing good to the people.
214. Achievement of glorious feats is through performing noble deeds.
215. Never regard what you give as too much, even if it is plenty, for indeed the good praise [you will get for your generosity] will be greater than it.
216. Never regard what you give as great, even if it is substantial, for indeed the extent of [humiliation undergone through] begging is greater than that.
217. One who does not show kindness [to others] in times of fortune will be abandoned in times of misfortune.
218. Whoever places his goodness with the one who does not deserve it has wasted it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

219. Doing a good turn to those who deserve it subdues the enemy and protects from falling into evil.
220. Never show your benevolence to the one who does not understand its value (or who is not good).
221. Do not do a good turn to the one who is ungrateful for your kindness.
222. Never hold back an act of benevolence, even if you do not find one who understands its value.
223. Do not be ashamed of giving little, for not giving at all is even less than that.
224. Never regard the abundance of what you have given to be much, for you are [in possession of] even more than that.
225. Never hold back from doing good turns and favours thereby being stripped of [your] ability.
226. Do not delay giving the needy to tomorrow, for you do not know what will happen to you or to him tomorrow.
227. Let not your brother be stronger in his iniquity towards you than you are in your goodness [towards him].
228. Never let the paucity of those who show gratitude for your benevolence deter you from it, for you have been thanked by the One who does not benefit from any of it; and more may be gained from the gratitude of the thankful than what is neglected by the ingrate.
229. Do not help [anyone] against the one who has favoured you, for the one who helps against the one who has favoured him is stripped of his ability.
230. Goodness does not thrive with the ignoble.
231. The wicked do not do good to anyone except those who are like them.
232. There is no merit loftier than benevolence.
233. There is no virtue greater than benevolence.
234. There is no benevolence more misused than doing good to the ingrate.
235. There is no virtue in doing good to one who does not know its value.
236. A good turn does not benefit except with one who possesses loyalty and self-restraint.
237. Giving little is better than offering excuses [for not giving].
238. Good turns do not thrive except with the honourable.
239. There is no virtue in the good turn that is reckoned [as a favour].
240. The consequences of kindness are never dispraised.
241. None is praised except the one who shows his kindness.
242. It is enough of a donation to give what is [readily] available.
243. Benevolence is the better of the two treasures.
244. Good turns are shackles that cannot be extricated except through gratitude or requital.
245. Completing a good turn is better than starting it.
246. A benevolent action is not completed except by three things: by taking it to be insignificant, by expediting it and by concealing it; for when you take it to be insignificant, you have made it great; and when you expedite it, you have made it beneficial; and when you conceal it, you have made it complete.
247. Doing a good turn is the best acquisition [for the Hereafter], and generosity is the best ornament.
248. When the kind people become fewer, those who adorn themselves get ruined.
249. By doing good to others, ranks get elevated.
250. By conferring favours, people are enthralled.
251. Through [his] abundant favours, the munificent person is recognized.
252. By conferring favours [to others], [one's] faults are hidden.
253. Give life to your good deed by killing it (i.e. by forgetting it).
254. Do good whenever possible, and deter the evildoer with righteous action.
255. Extend your benevolence to all the people, for verily nothing can be equated with the virtue of a good turn in the sight of Allah, the Glorified.
256. Give life to the benevolent act by killing it (i.e. forgetting it), for verily the sense of obligation destroys a good turn.
257. The best good deed is coming to the aid of the aggrieved.
258. The loftiest good turn is that which is done to those who deserve it.
259. The best favour of the wicked person is holding back his harm [from others].
260. The ugliest deed of an honourable person is withholding his contribution.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

261. Verily the people who do good [to others] are more in need of doing it than those who request it from them.
262. Benevolence is [a means of] servitude.
263. The most profitable wares are the rendering of benevolent actions.
264. The perfection of giving is in expediting it.
265. The human being is not enthralled until he is engulfed by favour.
266. One who is not good at seeking sympathy is faced with scorn.
267. Nothing enthralls the honourable ones like benevolence.
268. The best of treasures are: the good turn that is consigned to (or by) the free and the knowledge that is learned by the virtuous.
269. Ingratitude for favours leads to deprivation.
270. One who withholds from giving is deprived of (or prevents) praise.
271. Giving after having refused is more graceful than refusing after having given.
272. Whoever does good to the people, Allah covers him with His mercy and places him in His pardon.
273. Give whatever you are giving expeditiously and beneficially, and if you refuse then let it be with politeness and apology.
274. One who finds it easy to give away [his] wealth has hopes directed towards him.
275. One who loves to be remembered with praise should give generously from his wealth.
276. One who gives generously enthralls the people.
277. Nothing spreads renown like generosity.
278. Generosity is the expander of ability.
279. Generosity earns praise.
280. Through generosity, praises are increased.
281. By being generous with blessings, the blessings last longer.
282. Increased generosity is a sign of nobility.

Notes

1. Or: People are the children of what they do best.
2. Or: One who does not consider compassion to be good is faced with scorn.

121. THE GOOD DOER

1. Let not the good doer and the evildoer be equal in your eyes, for will make the good-doer abstain from his benevolence and will encourage the evildoer to continue his evil.
2. The charitable one needs the beggar.
3. Be open-handed but do not be wasteful.
4. The good doer person is one who is benevolent to all people.
5. The benevolent is supported, the malevolent is scorned.
6. The good doer is one whose words are affirmed by his actions.
7. The benevolent one is alive, even if he is transferred to the dwellings of the dead.
8. If you rush towards good whenever you see it, distance yourself from evil when you see it, act obediently [upon the commandments of Allah] and vie to acquire noble traits, then you are righteous and successful.
9. The worst of the benevolent ones is the one who puts others under obligation by his favour.
10. The doer of good deeds does not stumble, and when he does stumble, he finds a support [to hold on to].
11. Every good doer is affable.
12. The good doers are recognized by what the righteous people speak about them, and by their good deeds and virtuous conduct.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

122. PHYSICAL BEAUTY

1. Physical beauty is of no benefit without nobility.

123. DYSLOGIA (THE INABILITY TO EXPRESS ONESELF EFFECTIVELY)

1. The ugliness of dyslogia is better than the harm of talking nonsense.
2. The inability of effective expression weakens the argument.
3. Dyslogia is better than babble.

124. FORTUNE

1. The fortune of a person that comes through the ears is for himself and that which is on the tongue for others.
2. Fortune rushes towards the one who does not seek it.

125. GAINING FAVOUR

1. Favour is gained in the sight of the Creator by yearning for that which is with Him; favour is gained with the creatures by turning away from what they possess.

126. DIGGING A PIT FOR A BROTHER

1. One who digs a pit for his brother, Allah will cause him to fall in his [own] pit.
2. One who digs a pit for his believing brother will fall into it [himself].

127. SPITE AND MALICE

1. Malice is from the nature of the wicked.
2. Spite is a fire that is not put out except by vanquish. (It is a raging fire that is not put out by anything other than death or vanquish).
3. Malice wears away [its possessor].
4. Spite is the trait of the jealous ones.
5. Malice is the motive of rage.
6. Spite is the vilest of flaws.
7. Malice is a painful ailment and an infectious disease.
8. Malice is a vile characteristic and a fatal sickness.
9. Keep away from harbouring grudges against each other, hating each other, quarrelling with one other and not lending a supporting hand to each other, [and by doing this] you will gain mastery over your affairs.
10. The cornerstone of flaws is spite.
11. The cause of discord is malice.
12. The weapon of evil is spite.
13. The worst thing that resides in the heart is malice.
14. Extreme malice stems from the intense jealousy.
15. Purify your hearts from malice, for it is an infectious disease.
16. In times of difficulty, feelings of malice disappear.
17. One who eliminates malice [from his heart], his heart and mind becomes relaxed.

128. THE SPITEFUL

1. There is no brotherhood for the spiteful.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. One whose spite increases, his censure decreases.
3. One who sows hatred reaps tribulations.
4. How miserable is the life of a spiteful person!
5. The spiteful person has no love.
6. The spiteful one has a tormented soul is doubly distressed.
7. There is no repose for the spiteful.

129. BELITTling OTHERS

1. Do not belittle anyone until you have heard from him.

130. VERIFICATION

1. There is no action like verification.
2. There is no practice better than verification.

131. THE TRUTH

1. Truth is an incisive sword.
2. Truth is the best way.
3. Truth is the strongest supporter.
4. Truth is the clearest course.
5. The truth is worthier of being followed.
6. Assisting one another to establish the truth is [a sign of] trustworthiness and faith.
7. Truth is a sword [to fight] against the followers of falsehood.
8. Truth is a refuge for every worker (and an argument for every speaker).
9. Through truth, the petitioner gets support.
10. It is by turning away from the truth that misguidance comes about.
11. By clinging to the truth, support is received.
12. There is truth and falsehood, and each has its followers.
13. Truth that harms is better than falsehood that brings joy.
14. Plunge into hardships to [arrive at] the truth wherever it may be.
15. May Allah have mercy on the person who supports truth when he sees it, repels injustice when he sees it and assists his companion by truth.
16. May Allah have mercy of the person who enlivens the truth, causes falsehood to die, fights against oppression and establishes justice.
17. The peak of wisdom is clinging to the truth and obeying the one who stands for the truth.
18. Seeking assistance to establish the truth is [a sign of] faith and uprightness.
19. Cling to the things that necessitate the [establishment of] truth and beware of the things that transpose falsities [to make them seem true].
20. Your return to the truth is better than your persisting in falsehood.
21. Your returning to the truth, even if you get exhausted, is better than your comfort while clinging to falsehood.
22. In adhering to the truth, there is prosperity.
23. Abandon the one who has abandoned the truth for other than it, and leave him and that which he has preferred for himself.
24. Little truth repels much falsehood, just as a little fire burns a lot of firewood.
25. Speak the truth and you will benefit; do not utter falsehood and you will be safe.
26. For truth there is stability.
27. Let your refuge be the truth, for verily truth is the strongest supporter.
28. One who does not act upon the truth will never attain salvation.
29. One who acts upon the truth, gains [from it].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

30. One who acts upon the truth, profits.
31. One who acts upon the truth is saved.
32. One who acts upon the truth becomes successful.
33. One who fights against the truth is thrown down.
34. One who speaks truthfully is believed.
35. One who tries to prevail against the truth is overpowered [by it].
36. One who battles against the truth is ruined.
37. One who opposes the truth is killed (or thrown down) by it.
38. One who opposes the truth is seized by powerlessness.
39. One who opposes the truth has taken Allah as his adversary.
40. One who is not saved by the truth is destroyed by falsehood.
41. One who transgresses the truth, his path becomes narrowed.
42. One who seeks honour through truth will be honoured by truth.
43. One who shows his face [in opposition] to the truth is destroyed.
44. One who takes the truth as his reins, the people will take him to be their leader.
45. Whoever acts upon the truth, the creation incline towards him.
46. One who feels ashamed of speaking the truth is really a fool.
47. One who struggles to establish the truth is granted success [by Allah].
48. One who deviates from the truth, his end is dispraised.
49. Whoever surrenders to the truth and follows the rightful [leader] is [considered to be] among the righteous.
50. Whoever makes the truth his goal, difficult things are made easy for him and distant things are brought nearer to him.
51. Whoever weakens the truth and forsakes it is destroyed by falsehood and killed by it.
52. One whose goal is the truth will attain it, even if he is very uncertain.
53. Whoever opposes the truth, it kills him and whoever tries to overpower it, it humiliates him.
54. Whoever helps the truth, benefits.
55. How numerous are those who admit to the truth but do not follow it!
56. One who contends with the truth is defeated.
57. How good a guide truth is!
58. Do not hold back from presenting the truth when you find those who are worthy of it.
59. Let nothing make you feel at ease but the truth and let nothing make you uneasy except falsehood.
60. Let not your attention towards the rights of a person [who is close to you] prevent you from establishing justice against him.
61. Falsehood and truth do not go together.
62. None is patient in the face of truth except the judicious and intelligent one.
63. There is no messenger more conveying than the truth.
64. There is no adviser more sincere than the truth.
65. There is no companion who is dearer than the truth.
66. One who takes the support of truth is not defeated.
67. One who argues by truth is not defeated.
68. One who elevates himself by truth is not overtaken (or abased).
69. None is patient with the truth except the one who knows its merit.
70. A man cannot be faulted for taking his right, rather he can only be censured for taking that which is not [rightfully] his.
71. A little truth repels much falsehood.
72. [About the ones who did not participate in the battle]: They forsook the truth and did not assist the falsehood.
73. The truth is illuminated and free from prejudice and hypocrisy.
74. Act upon the truth even if it is against your desires and do not sell your Hereafter for this world.
75. Cling to the truth and it will take you to the place of the followers of truth, on the day when judgment will not be made except with truth.
76. Cling to the truth and salvation will cling to you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

77. Recognize the right of the one who knows your right, [be he] young or old, inferior or superior.
78. Indeed, one who is not benefitted by the truth is harmed by falsehood, and one who is not set straight by guidance is dragged down by misguidance.
79. The biggest loser is one who is able to speak the truth but still does not speak it.
80. The best of creation are those who judge more with truth, and the most beloved among them in the sight of Allah are those who are more truthful in speech.
81. One who is overcome [while he is] on the right, is victorious.
82. One who wages war against the truth is ruined.
83. Speaking the truth is better than inarticulateness and silence.

132. ONE WHO IS ON THE RIGHT

1. The goal of one who is on the right is [following or remaining on] the right course.

133. THE RIGHTS OF ALLAH, THE MOST HIGH

1. Giving this wealth in order to fulfil the rights of Allah has been made part of generosity.
2. Take out the [rightful] dues from your wealth and share in your wealth with your friend; let your speech be measured and your endeavour well thought-out, [for by this] you will remain safe from censure and regret.
3. The right of Allah, the Glorified, upon you in times of ease is piety and gratitude, and in times of hardship, [to have] contentment and patience.

134. RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE

1. Allah, the Glorified, has placed the rights of His servants before His rights, so whoever fulfils the rights of the servants of Allah, then this helps one to fulfil the rights of Allah.

135. HOARDING AND HOARDERS

1. The stingy hoarder accumulates for the one who does not thank him (i.e. his heirs) and proceeds towards the one who will not accept his excuse (i.e. Allah).
2. Hoarding is a vice.
3. Hoarding invites deprivation.
4. The hoarder is deprived of his blessing.
5. It is from the nature of the inexperienced [and ignorant] to trouble the people by hoarding.
6. Be solvent (or an assessor), and do not be a hoarder.
7. Hoarding is the practice of the vicious.

136. THE ORDINANCES OF ALLAH

1. In impelling the servants of Allah to follow (or in their acting upon) the ordinances of Allah, there is the fulfilment of rights and all of kindness.
2. If you were to preserve the bounds of Allah, the Glorified, He would hasten for you His promised bounty.
3. One who neglects the commandments of freedom is made to return to serfdom.

137. WISDOM

1. Wisdom is a garden for the intelligent and a promenade for the noble.
2. Wisdom does not settle in the heart of a hypocrite except that it departs from it [soon after].
3. Wisdom is the lost property of every believer, so take it even if it be from the mouths of hypocrites.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. Wisdom is a tree that grows in the heart and bears [its] fruit on the tongue.
5. Fill your heart with wisdom and don the attire of tranquillity for these two are the ornaments of the virtuous.
6. The beginning of wisdom is abandoning [worldly] pleasures and its end is loathing the transitory.
7. The greatest wisdom is for the human being to know himself and to remain within his limits.
8. Wisdom guides [one] to the right.
9. Wisdom is protection.
10. Wisdoms are the gardens of the noble ones.
11. When you get lost from the wisdom of Allah then stand with His power, for indeed [even] if you do not get of His wisdom that which can heal you, you will not lose of His power that which will suffice you.
12. Through wisdom, the veil of knowledge is removed.
13. The fruit of wisdom is success.
14. The fruit of wisdom is disdain for the world and infatuation with the Eternal Paradise.
15. The beauty of wisdom is kindness and good amicability.
16. The boundary of wisdom is turning away from the perishing abode [of this world] and being infatuated with the Eternal Abode [of the Hereafter].
17. The wisdom of a lowly person elevates him and the ignorance of a respectable person degrades him.
18. Take wisdom from wherever it may be, for verily wisdom is the lost property of every believer.
19. Take wisdom from the one who brings it to you, and look at what he is said and do not look at who said it.
20. The embellishment of wisdom is being uninterested in the pleasures of this world.
21. The lost possession of an intelligent person is wisdom, so he is more entitled to it wherever it may be.
22. The lost possession of a sage is wisdom, so he seeks it out wherever it may be.
23. Espouse wisdom, for indeed it is an exquisite ornament.
24. The prize of the sagacious is learning wisdom.
25. Sometimes words of wisdom may be uttered by one who is not wise.
26. Wisdom has been paired with protection [from sins].
27. Everything leads to weariness except novel wisdom.
28. How can one be patient in disassociating from the enemies [of his felicity] when he is not aided by wisdom?
29. Every time wisdom grows stronger, lust grows weaker.
30. Acquiring wisdom is [a means of] beautifying speech and employing kindness.
31. One who enjoys the insights of wisdom is not bereft of delight.
32. One who attaches himself to wisdom has ennobled himself.
33. One who is known for [his] wisdom is looked at with reverence.
34. One whose wisdom becomes established understands the lessons [that can be learnt from the past].
35. From the treasures of the unseen comes forth wisdom.
36. It is part of wisdom to obey the one who is above you, to respect those who are at your level and to be fair to those who are below you.
37. It is from [the dictates of] wisdom that you should not dispute with the one who is above you; you should not humiliate the one who is below you; you should not pursue that which is not in your ability; you should not let your tongue go against [what is in] your heart, nor let your words go against your deeds; you should not speak about that which you have no knowledge of; and you should not leave the matter when it comes in front of you and seek it when it has passed.
38. Gatherings of wisdom are the plantations of the praiseworthy.
39. Lustful desire and wisdom do not go together.
40. Wisdom does not reside in a heart [that is filled] with lust.
41. There is no wisdom except with safeguarding [from sin].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. The wise are the most honourable of all people, the most patient of them, the quickest of them in forgiving and the best of them in character.
2. The wise person cures the asker [of his ignorance] and is generous with virtues.
3. Sit in the company of the wise and your intelligence will be improved, you will ennoble yourself and your ignorance will be removed from you.
4. A wise person may [at times also] make a mistake.
5. He who complains of his troubles to one who is not compassionate is not a wise person.
6. He who expresses his joy to one who is not his close friend is not a wise person.
7. He who intends to take his request to one who is not wise (or generous) is not a wise person.
8. One who unveils the words of the wise benefits from their hidden meanings.
9. Indeed the speech of a wise person, when it is correct, is a cure and when it is wrong, is a malady.

139. GOVERNMENT AND SOVEREIGNTY

1. Obedience is the shield of the people and justice is the shield of governments.
2. The disgrace after being deposed is equal to the glory of sovereignty.
3. The humiliation of the man being deposed is equivalent to his evil as a sovereign.
4. Be just in that which you have been given authority and thank Allah for that which has been granted to you.
5. Protect your status near your king and be cautious not to be belittled due to [your] negligence in protecting that which elevated you to it.
6. Direct the people [based] on their practices and religions; let the innocent from among them be safe [from your wrath] and let the suspicious ones be afraid of you, and protect their frontiers and borders.
7. Make the religion your refuge and justice your sword, [then] you will be safe from every evil and will triumph over every foe.
8. Be cautious of inequity and tyranny, for verily inequity invites the sword and tyranny leads to expulsion and hastens retribution and revenge.
9. The most loathsome thing is the tyranny of rulers.
10. Kingship is politics.
11. Kingship spoils brotherhood.
12. Leadership is destruction.
13. Equity is the embellishment of leadership.
14. Haughtiness in sovereignty leads to disgrace in deposition.
15. Sovereignities are the arenas of men.
16. The instrument of leadership is [patience and] large-heartedness.
17. The bane of leadership is arrogance.
18. When you are given a position of authority, [then] act justly.
19. When the vile become sovereigns, the dignified ones are ruined.
20. When the depraved gain authority, hope turns into disappointment.
21. When the wicked become rulers, the honourable are persecuted.
22. The sovereignty of the vile and inexperienced over nations is the cause of their decline and regression.
23. Your haughtiness in sovereignty will be [the cause of your] disgrace in deposition.
24. The stability of nations is through the establishment of the practice of justice.
25. Love for authority is the primary source of tribulations.
26. The embellishment of leadership is bestowing favours.
27. The fall of nations results from the appointment of depraved leaders.
28. The excellence of leadership is [in] good governance.
29. Lack of leaders is easier to bear than the leadership of the depraved.
30. Every nation has its moment.
31. Nothing ever preserves nations like the exercising of justice in them.
32. One who oppresses his people helps his enemies.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

33. By the One who split the grain and created human being! If people had not come to me and supporters had not exhausted the argument, and if Allah had not commanded the learned that they should not acquiesce in the excesses of the oppressor and the hunger of the oppressed, I would have cast its rope (i.e. of Caliphate) on its own shoulders and would have given the last one to drink from the cup of the first (i.e. I would have let things remain in their previous state). Then you would have found that in my view, this world of yours is not better than the sneezing of a goat.

140. THE RULER AND GOVERNER

1. The generosity of rulers with booty belonging to the Muslims is [an act of] injustice and betrayal.
2. A predatory animal that is rapacious and tears its prey apart is better than an unjust and oppressive ruler.
3. The worst of rulers is one who is feared by the innocent.
4. One whose rule is oppressive, his regime collapses.
5. One who is haughty in his rule, his disgrace is greater when he is deposed.
6. One who becomes vain in his rule exhibits his stupidity.
7. It is from the right of the shepherd to choose for his flock that which he chooses for himself.
8. It is part of nobility that you [should] be attentive in fulfilling the rights of your subjects upon you and that you disregard any [of their] offences towards you.
9. An unjust and oppressive ruler is better than perpetual strife.
10. There is no oppression more severe than the oppression of a ruler.

141. FALSE OATHS

1. How can one be safe from the punishment of Allah when he is quick in making false oaths.
2. The swearing of a man increases for four [possible reasons]: something shameful that he knows about himself, or as a means of entreating by which he may be deemed truthful, or because of his inability to express himself so he takes oaths as verbiage to connect his speech, or because of an accusation that has been made upon him.
3. The thing that brings the quickest punishment is a false oath.
4. Do not habituate yourself to taking oaths, for verily the one who swears excessively is not safe from sin.

142. THE LAWFUL

1. You should cling to the lawful, and to treating your family with kindness, and to remembering Allah in all circumstances.

143. DREAMS

1. Dreams may [at times] come true.
2. A good dream is one of the two [forms of] glad-tidings.

144. THE FOREBEARING

1. The first compensation for the forbearing person from his forbearance is that all the people are [ready to be] his helpers against his enemy.
2. The forbearing person raises his determination, in that which he has been oppressed, above seeking an evil retribution.
3. Indeed the best of people is one who is forbearing even when he is strong [enough to exact revenge], is not attached to the pleasures of this world even though he is well-off and is just even though he has power.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. The forbearing is one who tolerates [the flaws of] his brothers.
5. The forbearing is one for whom it is not difficult to act with tolerance.
6. If you are not forbearing then act forbearing, for verily it is rare for a person who imitates a group not to soon become one among them.
7. Indeed only he is forbearing who is patient when he is offended and forgives when he is wronged.
8. Sit in the company of the forbearing and you will increase your forbearance.
9. Sometimes the forbearing person may get fed up.
10. A person who is not forbearing may at times dress in the garb of forbearance.
11. Be forbearing in [times of] anger, very patient [and courageous] in fear, [and] moderate in your request.
12. He who lacks strength and thus remains quiet, only to take revenge when he gets power, is not forbearing; rather only he is forbearing who forgives when he has power and over all of whose affairs forbearance prevails.
13. One who endeavours to act with forbearance becomes forbearing.
14. One who shows forbearance is honoured.
15. One who adorns himself with forbearance, his recklessness subsides.
16. One who does not endeavour to act with forbearance does not become forbearing.
17. Whoever infuriates you by the ugliness of his foolish behaviour towards you, then infuriate him by the beauty of your forbearance towards him.
18. One who seeks the support of forbearance against you defeats you and acts graciously towards you.

145. FORBEARANCE

1. Forbearance is one of the two excellent traits.
2. Forbearance during intense rage protects [one] from the wrath of the Almighty.
3. Forbearance puts out the fire of rage and acrimoniousness stokes it.
4. Be forbearing and you will be honoured.
5. Be forbearing and you will be respected.
6. Bear [the actions of others] with patience, otherwise you will never be pleased.
7. Veil [your] anger with forbearance and ignore misconceptions with understanding.
8. The strongest of all people is the one who overcomes his anger with his forbearance.
9. The best forbearance is suppressing anger and exercising self-restraint despite having power [to exact revenge].
10. The most courageous of people is the one who defeats ignorance with forbearance.
11. Verily the best of characteristics of men is forbearance.
12. Delaying punishment is from the perfection of forbearance.
13. Forbearance is [like] a tribe [as it protects those who belong to it].
14. Forbearance is the ornament of [one's] character.
15. Forbearance is the symbol of excellence.
16. Forbearance is the cornerstone of [good] leadership.
17. Forbearance is the fruit of knowledge.
18. Forbearance is a means of silencing the foolish.
19. Forbearance is the embellishment of knowledge.
20. Forbearance is the perfection of intellect.
21. Forbearance (or wisdom) is light, [and] its essence is the intellect.
22. Forbearance is the ornament of knowledge and the cause of peace.
23. Forbearance is the system by which the affairs of a believer are organized.
24. If in anger there is revenge, then in forbearance there is the reward of the virtuous.
25. Verily forbearance is only suppression of anger and self-restraint.
26. The bane of forbearance is humiliation.
27. When you are forbearing with a foolish person, you sadden him; so increase his sorrow by your forbearance towards him.
28. When you are forbearing with an ignorant person, you have given him the best reply.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

29. When you hear something hateful that troubles you, then lower your head, taking no notice of it, and it will pass you by.
30. When forbearance brings about corruption [and defiance in the enemy], forgiveness becomes a weakness.
31. Through forbearance, supporters increase.
32. It is through suppression [of anger] that forbearance comes about.
33. Gulping down the agonies of forbearance extinguishes the fire of anger.
34. Gulp down the agonies, for indeed I have not seen any drink that is sweeter than this in outcome, nor more tasteful in effect.
35. Gulp down the pains of forbearance, for indeed it is the cornerstone of wisdom and the fruit of knowledge.
36. The fruit of forbearance is kindness.
37. Virtuous forbearance is a sign of abundant knowledge.
38. The best forbearance is accustoming yourself to act with forbearance.
39. The cornerstone of knowledge is forbearance.
40. The alms-tax of forbearance is bearing patiently [with the bad behaviour of the people].
41. The cause of reverence is forbearance.
42. Espouse forbearance for verily it is the fruit of knowledge.
43. Espouse forbearance for indeed it is a pleasing characteristic.
44. It is when rage and anger prevails that the forbearance of the forbearing is tested.
45. The strength [required] for forbearance in times of anger is greater than the strength [needed] for vengeance.
46. Forbearance is sufficient as veneration.
47. Delaying punishment is from the perfection of forbearance.
48. The best vizier of knowledge is forbearance.
49. The dignity of forbearance is the adornment of knowledge.
50. I found forbearance and tolerance more helpful to me than courageous men.
51. Do not disgrace yourselves in order to alleviate your anger, and if an ignorant person acts ignorantly towards you then let your forbearance prevail over him.
52. There is no virtue like forbearance.
53. There is no supporter like forbearance.
54. There is no forbearance like feigning inattention [and pretending not to have noticed].
55. There is no dignity loftier than forbearance.
56. There is no honour higher than forbearance.
57. No one shows forbearance towards the foolish except the intelligent.
58. One who has no forbearance has no knowledge.
59. The forbearance of a person is evinced from his abundant tolerance, and his nobility [is evinced] from his abundant benefactions.

146. PRAISE

1. A Praiser should praise none but his Lord.
2. Whoever puts praise [for Allah] as the conclusion of a blessing, Allah, the Glorified, makes it the key for more [blessings].
3. Whoever praises Allah, He makes him free from want.

147. THE PRAISEWORTHY AND THE DISGRACEFUL

1. Try to increase your praiseworthy actions [and traits], for verily disgraceful actions [and traits] are such that very few gain salvation from them.

148. MUHAMMAD (S) AND HIS PROGENY

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Be pleased with Muhammad (s) as your guide [and role model] and as the one who will lead you to salvation.
2. Follow the guidance of your Prophet for it is the truest guidance, and emulate his practices for they are the most exemplary practices.
3. Be cautious of exceeding the limits with regards to us; say that we are servants of our Lord, and then you may believe anything you wish about our merits.
4. Indeed we, the household [of the Prophet], are the doors of wisdom, the lights that dispel darkness and the illumination of the nations.
5. Where are you wandering and where are you coming from and where are you straying to and what are you bewildered by while you have among you the progeny of your Prophet - they who are the guides towards right and speakers of truth?
6. Where are those who allege that they are firmly grounded in knowledge apart from us, while they lie and transgress against us, and harbour jealousy towards us because Allah, the Glorified, elevated us and lowered them, gave us and deprived them, put us in [His proximity] and expelled them; it is through us that guidance is granted and the blindness [of ignorance] is removed, not through them!
7. The most virtuous of good deeds is loving us and the most despicable of evil deeds is hating us.
8. The most fortunate of all people is one who knows our merits, seeks nearness to Allah through us, is sincere in his love for us, acts on that which we have entrusted to him and keeps away from that which we have forbidden, for this person is from us and he will be with us in the Eternal Abode.
9. The nearest of people to us is one who loyally supports us and has enmity for our enemies.
10. Indeed, for [the proclamation:] 'There is none worthy of worship but Allah' there are some conditions, and verily I and my progeny are from its conditions.
11. Verily, the beggar is a messenger of Allah, so one who gives to him gives to Allah and one who withholds from him, withholds from Allah, the Glorified.
12. Verily our affair is difficult and arduous, none can bear it except the servant whose heart Allah has tested for [and filled with] faith, and nothing preserves our words except the faithful hearts and discerning minds.
13. To us return the ones who exceed the bounds and the ones who lag behind [come forward to] meet up with us.
14. Verily Allah, the Exalted, made an appraisal of the world and (from it) chose us, and He chose for us followers who would help us, be happy in our happiness and sad in our sadness, and give up their lives and wealth for our sake they are ones who are (considered to be) from us and unto us, and they will be with us in the gardens (of Paradise).
15. Verily our affair is difficult and arduous, rough and harsh, secret, hidden and veiled, none have access to it except the favoured angel, the appointed prophet or the believer whose heart Allah, the Glorified, has tested for faith.
16. Indeed here (and he pointed towards his chest) there is great knowledge; if only I could get someone who would bear it. Yes, I do find some who can understand but cannot be relied upon and would use the tools of religion for worldly gain or would dominate the people through the favours of Allah over His servants and through His authority over His friends; or [I find] one who is submissive to those who bear the truth but has no insight or intelligence, misgivings pierce into his heart at the first instance of doubt.
17. The People of Remembrance (or followers of the Qur'an) are the People of Allah and His favoured ones.
18. I am the allotter of hellfire, the treasurer of the gardens [of Paradise], the owner of the pond [of Kawthar] and the holder of the Elevations, and there is no Imam from among us, the household [of the Prophet], except that he knows those who are his sincere friends [and followers], and this is the meaning of the words of the Most High: 'You are only a warner, and there is a guide for every people'
19. I am the brother of the Prophet of Allah, the first to accept Islam, the breaker of the idols, the warrior against the disbelievers and the vanquisher of adversaries.
20. I am the one who turn this world over on its face, gauges it according to its true value and drives it back on its heels.
21. I am the leader (ya'sūb) of the believers and wealth is the leader of the wicked.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

22. I will be with the Prophet of Allah, the blessings of Allah be upon him, and with me will be my progeny at the pond (so act upon our words and emulate our actions as we will vie at the pond [of Kawthar]), and we will verily drive away our enemies from it and let our close friends drink from it, and whoever takes a drink from it will never be thirsty after that again.
23. I put the chests of the Arab [warriors] on the ground and broke the backs (or the protruding horns) of the tribes of Rabī'ah and Mu
24. I am a witness for you [if you follow me] and a plaintiff against you [if you disobey me] on the Day of Judgment.
25. I am your inviter towards the obedience of your Lord, your mentor to performing your religious obligations and your guide to that which will save you.
26. My household and I are the [means of] security for the people of earth just as the stars are the [means of] security for the people of the heavens.
27. I am the representative of the Prophet of Allah among you, and the one who will keep you within the boundaries of your religion, and the one who calls you towards the Garden of the Abode.
28. Verily I am standing on a manifest proof from my Lord, insight in my religion and certitude in my affair.
29. Verily I am on the highway of truth and they are surely on the erroneous path of falsehood.
30. Verily it is for the establishment of the proofs of Allah that I argue and it is in order to support His religion that I struggle and fight.
31. Indeed I raise myself such that there should be no need that my generosity cannot encompass, nor any ignorance that cannot be encompassed by my forbearance, nor any wrongdoing that my forgiveness cannot encompass, nor should there be a time that is longer than my time [spent in worship and righteous actions].
32. Whenever I would ask the Prophet of Allah (s), he would give to me and when I was silent and did not ask, he would be the one to initiate [the matter] with me.
33. The example of my presence among you is only like a lamp in the darkness, he who enters upon it receives its light.
34. Certainly the Imams are the [only] vicegerents of Allah over His creation and the ones who explain His servants about Him; and none will enter Paradise except the one who recognizes them and is recognized by them and none will enter the hellfire except the one who rejects them and is rejected by them.
35. Indeed the protectors of the religion of Allah are the only ones who establish the religion, support it, surround it from all sides and protect it for the servants of Allah and safeguard it.
36. (In remembrance of the Prophet of Allah (s), he said): He conveyed [the message] from his Lord completely, such that nobody remained with any excuse [for not having accepted the message], he counselled his people as a warner and called [them] towards Paradise as a bringer of glad tidings.
37. Through us you were guided in the darkness, and by us you ascended the peaks [of knowledge and faith], and by way of us did you break through the pitch-black night [into the light of day].
38. Through us Allah opens and through us Allah seals, through us Allah effaces and confirms whatever He wills, through us Allah removes the time of difficulty [or intense thirst and drought] and through us Allah sends down rain; so let not the Deceiver deceive you concerning Allah.
39. Mingle with the people through that which they recognize and leave them in that which they reject, and do not burden them [by compelling them] to follow yourselves and us, for indeed our affair is difficult and arduous.
40. He ('a) said about the Prophet of Allah (s): He left this world hungry but entered the next world in soundness. He did not lay one brick upon another [to make a house for himself] until he passed away and responded to the caller of his Lord.
41. The caller is calling and the guardian is watching over you, so respond to the caller and follow the guardian.
42. Ask me [about what you need to know] before you lose me, for verily I am more aware of the ways of the heavens than you are of the ways of the earth.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

43. Ask me before you lose me, for by Allah, there is no verse in the Qur'an but that I know about whom it was revealed and where it was revealed, in the plains or on the mountains, and indeed my Lord has gifted me with an intelligent heart and an eloquent tongue.
44. Remembering the Prophet of Allah (s), he ('a) said: His practice was moderation, his action was right guidance, his speech was distinguishing [of truth from falsehood], his judgment was just, his words were articulate and his silence was the most eloquent speech.
45. Attach yourselves to the one who is between you and Allah, [and] you will be felicitous.
46. Establish your bond with the one who is between you and Allah, [and] you will be felicitous in your final place of return [in the Hereafter].
47. Remembering the Prophet of Allah (s) he said: [He was] a physician who moved about with his remedies, having readied his salves and warmed his instruments. He used these whenever needed for curing blind hearts, deaf ears and dumb tongues. He would take his cures to the places of negligence and sites of perplexity.
48. You should love of the progeny of your Prophet, for this is the right of Allah over you and this will obligate your right upon Allah. Do you not see that Allah has said 'Say, I do not ask you any reward for it except love of (my) near relatives.'
49. You must obey your Imams, for they are witnesses over you today and intercessors for you with Allah tomorrow.
50. It is the duty of the Imam to teach the people who follow him about the boundaries of Islam and Imān (faith).
51. The [leader and] guide must be truthful to his followers and must employ his intellect; and he must be from those who are inclined to the Hereafter, for it is from there that he came forth and to it will be his return.
52. The riser has risen, the dazzler has dazzled, the apparent has appeared and the crooked has been straightened.
53. He said while remembering the Messenger of Allah (s): He belittled this world, took it lightly and treated it with disdain; he knew that Allah willed to keep it away from him while He bestowed it to others as a trial.
54. Whenever I asked the Messenger of Allah (s), he would give to me and when I held back, he would be the one to initiate [the matter] with me.
55. For our hatred there are waves of wrath from Allah, the Glorified.
56. I have patched this shirt of mine so much that I am now ashamed of [taking it again to] the tailor. Someone asked me: Will you not discard it? I replied: Get away from me! Only at dawn do people speak highly of the [arduous] night journey.
57. This world will incline towards us after having been refractory just like the wild camel inclines towards its young.
58. I am not, nor have I ever been, intimidated by battle or frightened of being struck [by swords].
59. If the veils were removed, my certitude would not increase.
60. If my feet were to rest firmly on these slippery areas, I would surely change [many] things.
61. If we had done as you did, no pillar of the religion would be left standing and no plant of faith would grow.
62. If I wished to inform every man from among you of where he has come from and where he is going to and about all his affairs, I would do so, but I fear that you will take me and abandon the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him. However, I will convey it to the selected ones who are safe from that [fear]. By the One who sent him with truth and chose him above the creation, I do not speak save the truth. He (the Prophet) has informed me about all this and about the destruction of those who are destroyed and the salvation of those who are saved (and the consequences of this matter [of the caliphate]). He left nothing that I would encounter except that he put it into my ear and informed me about it.
63. We have a right [to it] if it is given to us, otherwise we ride on the hinds of camels even if the night journey is long.
64. We have the right of obedience and love over the people, and for them [for this] there is a goodly reward from Allah, the Glorified.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

65. Whoever clings to us will join us.
66. Whoever turns away from us will be annihilated.
67. One who follows our commandments advances.
68. One who boards other than our ship, drowns.
69. They (i.e. the Imams) are the trustees of the secrets of the Messenger of Allah (s), the protectors of his mission, the container of his knowledge, the sanctuary of his wisdom, the caverns of his books and the mountains of his religion.
70. They are the gems of faith and the treasures of the Most Merciful. When they speak, they are truthful and when they remain silent, they are not surpassed.
71. They are the treasures of faith and the sources of virtue; when they judge, they do justice and when they debate, they overcome.
72. They are the foundation of religion and the pillar of certitude; to them return those who have exceeded the limits and those who are behind [come forward to] join them.
73. They are the lamps in the darkness, the springs of wisdom, the sources of knowledge and the loci of forbearance.
74. They are the life of knowledge and the death of ignorance. Their forbearance (or wisdom) is conveyed to you from their knowledge, their silence from their speech (and their apparent from their hidden); they do not go against the truth (or the religion) nor do they differ in it, for it is among them as a silent speech and a truthful witness.
75. Do not stray from the truth and its people, for verily whoever opts [to follow] other than us, the household [of the Prophet], perishes and loses in [both] this world and the Hereafter.
76. The world is never devoid of an establisher of the proof of Allah, either [as an] apparent and known [person] or [as a] hidden and unknown [person], so that the proof of Allah and His message does not become void.
77. No one from this nation can be compared to the progeny of Muhammad, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, and no one who has benefitted from their blessings (i.e. the blessings of their knowledge and wisdom) will ever be equal to them.
78. People! There is no proof of Allah, the Glorified, on His earth greater than our Prophet, Muhammad (s), nor is there any wisdom more manifest than His book, the Glorious Qur'an and Allah, the Exalted, has not praised anyone from among you except he who holds fast to his rope and follows His prophet; and only he perishes, who perishes when he disobeys Him, goes against His commands and follows his vain desires. This is why the Almighty says '... let those who disobey His order beware lest an ordeal should afflict them or a painful chastisement befall them.'
79. The one who looks with the insight of the wise sees his path of guidance (or goal) and knows its valleys and its peaks.
80. We are the callers to truth, the leaders of creation and the speakers of truth, he who obeys us acquires [success] and he who disobeys us is destroyed.
81. By Allah! I have never hidden a single word nor have I ever spoken a lie.
82. By Allah! I do not hate the sudden coming of death to me, nor is it an event that I reject. I am but like a traveller who has come to his destination or a seeker who finds what he is looking for.
83. By Allah! If I were to spend a sleepless night on the thorns of al-Sa'dān or be driven shackled in chains as a prisoner, it would be more acceptable to me than meeting Allah and His Prophet as an oppressor over any [of His] servants, or a usurper of any worldly possessions. And how can I oppress for the sake of the body which is fast moving towards destruction and is going to spend a long time [buried] in the earth?
84. The devout companions of the Messenger of Allah (s) know that I never disobeyed Allah, the Glorified, or His Prophet for even a moment; and I supported him in situations where the valiant ones retreated and when the feet were slow in moving forward with courage - Allah honoured me with [all] this. I spared no effort in his obedience, may the blessings of Allah be upon him, and I fought his enemies with all my might, and I put my life on the line in order to protect him, and he divulged to me from his knowledge that which he did not divulge to anyone other than me.
85. Knowledge has led them to real understanding and they have acquired the spirit of conviction. They take easy what the easygoing regard as hard. They are comfortable with that which the ignorant are

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

- repelled by. They live in this world with their bodies but their spirits are in the higher realm. They are the vicegerents of Allah on His earth and the callers to His religion. Ah, ah! How I yearn to see them.
86. They are the supports of Islam and those entrusted with its protection. Through them the truth is restored in its rightful place and falsehood is removed from its position with its tongue is severed from its root. They have understood religion through reflection and contemplation, not by mere hearsay and [blind following of] what is narrated.
87. Verily we are the masters of speech; in us its offshoots (or veins) are fixed and its branches hang over us.
88. The chain of delusion will never be severed until the rising of the [Imam of the] avenger of the age.
89. We are the door of 'Hittah' which is the door of peace; one who enters it is safe and secure, whereas one who turns away from it is destroyed.
90. We are the middle cushion which is joined by those who remain behind and to which those who have exceeded the limits return.
91. We are the trustees of Allah over His servants and the establishers of truth in His lands. Through us the friend [of Allah] is saved and by us the enemy is destroyed.
92. We are the [family] tree of Prophethood, the station of revelation, the ones upon whom angels descend, the fountains of wisdom and the sources of knowledge. Our helpers and lovers await mercy while our enemies and haters await wrath.
93. We are the nearest ones [to the Prophet (s)], the companions, the custodians [of the treasures of Paradise] and the doors [of knowledge and wisdom]; and houses are not entered but through their doors, and whoever enters them without going through their doors is [considered] a thief and is not spared punishment.
94. Far be it! If there was no command of piety, I would have been the most cunning of all the Arabs.
95. I have never rejected Allah from the time that I came to know Him.
96. I have never doubted in the truth since the time it was shown to me.
97. I have never lied nor have I been accused of lying.
98. I have never strayed [from the right path] nor has anyone gone astray because of me.
99. No verse [of the Qur'an] was revealed but that I knew the occasion of its revelation and where it was revealed, [whether] in daytime or night, on a mountain or a plain; and my Lord has gifted me with an intelligent heart and an eloquent tongue.
100. We have established the pillar of truth and vanquished the forces of falsehood.

Notes

1. This tradition falls under the subject of giving charity.
2. Surah al-Ra'd [13]:7
3. A male bee which is followed by the other bees.
4. Part of the sermon was delivered after he became the Khalifa.
5. Because he had already reached the peak of certitude.
6. An expression that conveys humility as it was only slaves and prisoners who would ride on the hinds of camels.
7. Al-Noor [24]:63
8. This is a plant with sharp prickles.

149. FOOLISHNESS

1. Foolishness is occupying oneself with the superfluous and accompanying the ignorant.
2. Foolishness is an ailment which cannot be remedied and a sickness that cannot be cured.
3. The worst indigence is foolishness.
4. The most harmful thing is foolishness.
5. The height of foolishness is being beguiled [by the pleasures of this world].
6. The greatest foolishness is exaggeration in praise and censure.
7. The greatest foolishness is being conceited in [the state of] poverty.
8. Foolishness is a disgrace.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

9. Foolishness is the most harmful companion.
10. Foolishness is the worst ailment.
11. Foolishness leads to superfluity.
12. Foolishness is from the fruits of ignorance.
13. Foolishness makes one a stranger in his own hometown.
14. How bad an ailment foolishness is!
15. The poverty of foolishness is not alleviated by [material] wealth.
16. Being conceited in poverty is the height of foolishness.
17. Establishing brotherhood with the vicious is from the greatest [acts of] foolishness.
18. Being audacious in front of the king is an act of foolishness.
19. From the signs of foolishness are: being audacious without any means and boasting without [possessing] any nobility.
20. With foolishness, what is sought is not achieved.
21. There is no ailment worse than foolishness.
22. There is no poverty more severe than foolishness.
23. Foolishness is wretchedness.

150. THE FOOL

1. The fool is a stranger in his [own] hometown, [and is] humiliated among his near ones.
2. A fool does not improve by abasement and he does not separate from fault and loss.
3. Be wary of the fool for verily, being amicable with him will bring you hardship (or exhaust you), agreeing with him will destroy you, disagreeing with him will cause you suffering and keeping his company will be [like] a curse upon you.
4. The most foolish of all people is the one who thinks that he is the most intelligent of all people.
5. The most foolish of all people is the one who prevents good deeds and [then] seeks gratitude, and does evil and [then] expects the reward for [doing] good.
6. The most foolish of all people is the one who censures others for a vice while he [himself] performs it.
7. The fool does not improve by being disgraced.
8. The remoteness of a fool is better than his nearness and his silence is better than his speech.
9. The foolishness of a person is recognized by [his] cheerfulness in times of blessing and increased abjectness in times of tribulation.
10. The foolishness of a person is recognized in three things: in his talking about that which does not concern him, [in] his answering that which he was not asked and his recklessness in [his] affairs.
11. Cutting off [ties with] the fool is judiciousness.
12. Be cautious of the fool when you are in his company, of the vicious when you associate with him and of the oppressor when you deal with him.
13. For the fool there is an oath with every statement.
14. Be careful not to love the fool, for he will surely harm you while he thinks that he is benefitting you and will annoy you while he thinks that he is pleasing you.
15. Keeping silent is the best response for a fool.
16. Increased fickleness is from the signs of a fool.
17. Putting up with a fool is a torment for the soul.
18. Never show respect to a fool, even if he is [apparently] great.

Notes

1. i.e. he swears with every statement that he makes.

151. TOLERANCE

1. Tolerance is proof of intelligence and a symbol of excellence.
2. Tolerance is the ornament of companionship.
3. Tolerance is the embellishment of politics [and leadership].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. Tolerance dignifies one's status.
5. Tolerance is a beautiful quality.
6. Tolerating meanness (or annoyance) is from nobility of character.
7. By bearing the burden of provision (for the people), praises increase.
8. Through increased tolerance, one's merit (or intelligence) increases.
9. Through tolerance and forbearance, people become your helpers and supporters.
10. The forbearing one is recognized by his increased tolerance.
11. Be tolerant, [and] your status will become lofty.
12. Adopt tolerance, for verily it is [a means of] concealing faults.
13. One whose tolerance increases becomes noble.
14. One who does not bear the burden of providing for the people has prepared his power for its transference.
15. It is part of honour to tolerate the wrongdoings of [one's] brothers.
16. Tolerate that which comes your way, for indeed tolerance is a [means of] concealing faults and verily the wise one is half [the time] tolerant and half [the time] feigning negligence.
17. Continually bearing the liabilities [of others] causes loftiness [of character].

152. VEHEMENCE

1. It is to the extent of one's vehemence that one is protective of his honour.
2. Allah! Allah! I warn you servants of Allah, against feeling proud of your bigotry and boasting over your ignorance, for indeed these are the fertilizers of enmity and the bellows of Satan.
3. There is no vehemence in one who has no sense of honour.

Notes

1. In the sense of protecting one's dignity and integrity.

153. ABSTINENCE [FROM FOOD]

1. Fitness of the body is [in] abstinence from [harmful] foods.
2. One who cannot patiently bear the agony of abstinence [from food], his sickness will be prolonged.

154. FULFILLING NEEDS

1. Verily the needs of the people that are addressed to you are a blessing from Allah upon you, so take advantage of them and do not be weary of them, lest they should turn into [divine] wrath.
2. Do not delay granting the needy to tomorrow, for you do not know what will happen to you and to him tomorrow.
3. You must seek the fulfilment of your needs through people of honourable dispositions and origins, you will be successful [in getting what you need] with them, without any delay or any sense of obligation.
4. You must seek your needs from those who are honourable and of good origins, for they are more likely to fulfil them [quickly and without obligation] and they are purer in your eyes.
5. I am amazed at the person who is approached by his Muslim brother in need and refuses to fulfil it, not deeming himself worthy of [doing] good; so assume that he does not desire any reward nor does he fear any punishment. Do they lack interest in [acquiring] noble traits?
6. Not having your needs fulfilled is better than seeking them from those who are not worthy.
7. Being generous with power [and fulfilling the needs of the people with it] is the alms-tax of power.
8. Expediting the release [of the needy from his need] is [a means of] success.
9. The fulfilling of needs is not made righteous except by three things: by considering it to be small such that it becomes great, by hiding it such that it is made apparent [by Allah] and by expediting it such that it becomes felicitous.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

10. Everyone who has been given time [to do good before his death] gives excuses for postponement [of good deeds].
11. Turning away the needy is the cause of diminishment of affluence.

155. EXPRESSING YOUR NEEDS

1. Express your needs to whomever you wish and (you will) become his captive.
2. When you express your needs to someone, you abase yourself before him.
3. One who seeks his needs from you, his obedience to you will be to the extent of his need from you.
4. When someone turns to you with his needs, it becomes obligatory upon you to help him.

156. HOW ARE YOU?

1. (When he was asked 'how are you O Amīr al-Mu'minīn?', he replied:) How would he be whom life is driving towards death, whose state of health can be changed to sickness at any moment and who can be approached [by death] from his place of safety?!

157. THE PERPLEXED

1. It is possible for the one who is perplexed and bewildered to be excused.

158. RECOURSE

1. Subtlety in [seeking] recourse is the most advantageous of all ways.
2. For everything there is recourse.
3. One who neglects his recourse (or natural disposition) is made to rise [towards it] by tribulations.

159. LIFE AND BEING ALIVE

1. The living one is never satisfied [and always seeks more].
2. The fruit of long life is illness and senility.
3. The end of [this] life is death.
4. How close is life to death!
5. How near is the living one to the dead because he will soon join him!
6. How far is the dead one from the living by his separation from him!

160. MODESTY AND SHAME

1. Being ashamed in front of Allah, the Glorified, protects [one] from the punishment of hell.
2. The most modest among you are the most forbearing among you.
3. The best of religious attires is modesty.
4. The greatest modesty is your being ashamed in front of Allah.
5. The best modesty is your being ashamed of yourself [in front of Allah].
6. Verily modesty and chastity are from the characteristics of faith, and they are the traits of the free and the qualities of the virtuous.
7. Modesty is beautiful.
8. Modesty is preventive.
9. Shame prevents livelihood.
10. Modesty is the key to (every) good.
11. Shame is accompanied by deprivation.
12. Modesty is the lowering of one's gaze.
13. Modesty is the perfection of honour.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

14. Modesty is the partner of chastity.
15. Modesty is a beautiful quality.
16. Modesty is a pleasing characteristic.
17. Modesty is the perfection of honour and the best of traits.
18. Modesty prevents one from ugly actions.
19. Being ashamed in front of Allah effaces many of the sins [that one has committed].
20. Dress yourself with modesty, wear the armour of loyalty, safeguard brotherhood and reduce your conversations with women, [if you do all this] your eminence will become complete.
21. The fruit of modesty is chastity.
22. Three things that are not to be ashamed of [are]: for a person to serve his guest, and for him to stand up from his place for his father or his teacher, and [for him] to seek the right even if it is little.
23. The shame of person feels from himself is the fruit of [his] faith.
24. The source of chastity is modesty.
25. Espouse modesty, for it is the symbol of nobility.
26. The pinnacle of modesty is for a man to feel ashamed of himself.
27. Shame has been paired with deprivation.
28. The increased modesty of a person is the sign of his faith.
29. One who is shy is deprived.
30. Whoever has no modesty has no good in him.
31. One whose modesty is reduced, his piety is [also] reduced.
32. Whoever is clothed with the garment of modesty, his faults are hidden from the people.
33. One who does not fear facing the people [after having been caught doing evil] does not fear Allah, the Glorified.
34. One who is not ashamed of the people will not feel ashamed in front of Allah, the Glorified.
35. That which is not appropriate for you to do in the open should not be done by you in private.
36. The best partner of generosity is modesty.
37. The best partner of faith is modesty.
38. There is no [good] trait like modesty.

Notes

1. Here shame is used in the negative sense of excessive bashfulness, timidity etc.

161. NARRATION AND TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION

1. Do not relate that which you have no knowledge about.
2. Never transmit information except from a reliable person otherwise you will become a liar, and if you transmit from other than him then surely telling lies is [a cause of] disgrace and dishonour.
3. Do not hasten to the people with that which they dislike so that they [begin to] speak about you that which they do not know.
4. Analyze the information when you hear it with the analysis of understanding (i.e. in order to understand it), not the analysis of narration (i.e. in order to narrate it to others), for indeed the narrators of information are many but those who consider it carefully are few.
5. Reports will never be accepted as true until [they are] verified by the eyes.

162. GAUGING PEOPLE

1. Accompany [people] so that you may gauge [their true nature].
2. One who gauges [the people] detests (or keeps away from) [them].
3. Being at ease with every person before gauging [them] is from lack of intellect.
4. One who feels at ease [with people] before gauging them, regrets.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

163. DECEPTION AND THE DECEITFUL

1. Beware of [engaging in] deception, for verily deception is from the qualities of the vile.
2. He who makes his intelligence follow deceptions has deluded it.
3. One who tries to deceive Allah is [himself] deceived.
4. The deceiver has no religion.

164. THE SERVANT

1. Beat your servant when he disobeys Allah but forgive him when he disobeys you.

165. THE ONE WHO IS FORSAKEN BY ALLAH

1. From the signs of being forsaken by Allah is considering that which is evil as something good.
2. One of the indications of being forsaken by Allah is taking the rights of [one's] brothers lightly.
3. Abandonment is a support for ignorance.
4. The forsaken is he who has to ask for something from the ignoble.

Notes

1. Because of the evil actions that one performs. See Q3:160

166. MUTENESS

1. Muteness is better than lying.

167. INEPTNESS

1. Ineptness is opposing [others'] views and having enmity with one who is capable of causing harm.
2. Be cautious of ineptness for it disgraces [one's] character.
3. The ugliest thing is ineptness.
4. The worst thing is ineptness.
5. Ineptness is a disgraceful attribute.
6. Ineptness is the worst quality.
7. How bad a quality ineptness is!
8. The height of ignorance is ineptness.
9. One whose ineptness increases is scorned.
10. How many an elevated person has been degraded by the ugliness of his ineptitude!
11. It is from ineptness to make haste before [having] ability, and to act slowly after getting the opportunity.
12. Increased ineptness is an abomination.
13. It is from ineptitude to let go of an opportunity when one is able to take it.
14. Ineptness is not in anything but that it tarnishes it.
15. There is no quality more disgraceful than ineptitude.
16. There is no attribute more belittling than ineptitude.

168. THE LOSER

1. Many a person who gains is [actually] a loser.
2. The biggest loser from among you is the most unjust from among you.
3. How great a loser is he for whom there is no share [of reward] in the Hereafter!

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

169. SUBMISSIVENESS AND HUMILITY IN FRONT OF ALLAH

1. When you are guided to your goal then be most submissive in front of your Lord.
2. Everything is humble in front of Allah.
3. Everything is submissive in front of Allah.
4. One whose heart submits, his limbs [also] submit.
5. Whoever is humble in front of the majesty of Allah, people become submissive to him.
6. The best form of obedience is submission and humility.
7. How good a supporter of supplication submissiveness!
8. There is no worship like [that which is accompanied by] humility.
9. Humility means servility [in front of Allah].

170. THE FOE OF ALLAH

1. One whose enemy is Allah, the Glorified, his proof is refuted and he is punished in this world and in his Hereafter.
2. One whose enemy is Allah, his proof is refuted and Allah wages war with him.

171. WRITING

1. Put cotton in your inkpot, keep the nib of your pen long, leave space between your lines and keep the letters close to each other, for this makes the writing more beautiful.
2. Open the sharpened nib of your pen, thicken its point [so that it does not break easily] and cut the edge on the right side so that your handwriting becomes good.
3. Writing is the tongue of the hand.

172. IDEAS

1. The imbueing of ideas is through deliberation.

173. THE DARING

1. The daring risk-taker charges towards danger.

174. MISTAKES

1. Making many mistakes points towards excessive ignorance.

175. SINCERITY AND DEVOTION

1. Sincerity is in grave danger, until it is seen what it concludes with.
2. Be sincere and you will attain [success].
3. Let your action, your knowledge, your love, your hatred, your taking, your leaving, your speech and your silence [all] be [sincerely] for the sake of Allah.
4. Adopt sincerity in secret and in the open, fear [of Allah] when unseen and seen, moderation in poverty and wealth, and equity in satisfaction and anger.
5. Be sincere when you perform an action [and do it only for the pleasure of Allah].
6. Sincerity is the goal [of worship].
7. Sincerity is [a means of attaining] success.
8. Being sincere is the best of actions.
9. Sincerity is the fruit of worship.
10. Sincerity is the attribute of the most excellent people.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

11. Sincerity is the highest [form of] success.
12. Sincerity is the worship of the Near Ones [to Allah].
13. Sincerity is the goal of religion.
14. Sincerity is the most honourable end.
15. Sincerity is the fruit of certitude.
16. Sincerity is the foundation of worship.
17. Sincerity is the highest [level of] faith.
18. Sincerity in action stems from strong faith and righteous intention.
19. If you are sincere, you will be successful.
20. Through sincerity, deeds are raised (i.e. are accepted).
21. Through sincerity, the doers of good deeds contend for excellence.
22. The true sincerity of a person makes his nearness [to Allah] greater and his reward abundant.
23. Blessed is one who anticipates his death and makes his actions sincere.
24. Blessed is he who makes his knowledge, his actions, his love, his hatred, his taking, his leaving, his speech and his silence sincere for [attaining the pleasure of] Allah.
25. Blessed is he who proceeds with sincerity, acts with righteousness, acquires the reserves [for the Hereafter] and eschews [the disobedience of Allah] cautiously.
26. You must espouse true sincerity and complete certitude, for these two are the best forms of worship of the Near Ones [to Allah].
27. The goal of sincerity is [attaining] deliverance [from the punishment of Allah].
28. It is for making actions sincere that the people of intellect and understanding contend.
29. How can one be capable of sincerity when he has been overcome by vain desire?
30. One who devotes himself sincerely to Allah gains support for his life in this world and his Hereafter.
31. One whose action is not accompanied with sincerity, [his action] is not accepted.
32. With sincerity, deeds are raised (i.e. accepted).
33. No one preserves his reward except the one who makes his action sincere.
34. There is nothing better than making action sincere in [accordance with] its true intention.
35. The sincere one is worthy of getting [his prayers] answered.
36. One who makes his actions sincere, attains his hopes.

176. SUCCESSION

1. How strange it is that the succession [to the Prophet] is [decided] by companionship [only] and not by companionship and kinship.

177. THE CALIPHS

1. With Allah, the Glorified, lies the clear verdict between the appropriator [Uthmān] and the protestor [who was responsible for his assassination].

Notes

1. Part of sermon no. 30 of Nahj al-Balāgha.

178. DISAGREEMENT

1. Disagreement wrecks [good] ideas.
2. Organized affairs are disrupted by disagreement.
3. The cause of disunity is disagreement.
4. With disagreement there is no harmony.
5. From disagreement stems repulsion [and hatred].
6. Too much disagreement is discord.
7. Disagreement is the motive for wars.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

8. Disputes demonstrate the foolishness of a person and do not increase his claim.

Notes

1. Another possible translation as mentioned by 'Allāma Khwānsari (r) is: From opposition (to vain desires) loftiness is achieved.

392

179. GOOD CHARACTER

1. A refined character is one of the two blessings.
2. The best thing is [good] character.
3. The most honourable distinction is [good] character.
4. The best of qualities is honourable ambition.
5. The most beautiful qualities are forbearance and chastity.
6. The purest of all people in lineage is the best of them in character.
7. The most pleased of all people is one whose character is agreeable.
8. The best eminence is [in possessing] a beautiful character.
9. The most honourable quality of the noble one is his feigning inattention [and ignorance] about that which he is aware [regarding the negative traits of others].
10. The best of qualities are generosity, chastity and tranquillity.
11. The best of morals are those which drive you towards noble deeds.
12. Verily Allah, the Glorified and Exalted, loves the person who is approachable [and courteous], of tolerant disposition and prompt in getting things done.
13. Verily it is from nobility of character to build ties with the one who cuts you off, to give one who deprives you and to forgive one who wrongs you.
14. Noble traits are [acquired] through difficulties.
15. A praiseworthy character is one of the fruits of intelligence.
16. He ('a) said about those whom he praised: When they speak, they are truthful and when they are silent, they are not surpassed. When they look, they take lesson and when they turn away, they are not distracted. When they talk, they remember [Allah] and when they are quiet, they contemplate.
17. If you must compete with each other, then vie for [acquiring] desirable qualities and praiseworthy traits.
18. One whose character is bad, his death is [considered a time of] happiness.
19. When the character is good, the speech becomes gentle.
20. When there is an admirable quality in a man, then expect from him other such qualities.
21. When the Qur'an calls you towards [acquiring] a beautiful quality, then compel yourself to adopt [a quality] like it.
22. With good character, life becomes pleasant.
23. By [adopting] good character, sustenance becomes abundant.
24. Opting for the truth and keeping away from untruth is the most beautiful quality and the best etiquette.
25. Compete in acquiring [a] desirable character, great forbearance and lofty ideas, [and] your reward will become great.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

26. You should be zealous for praiseworthy qualities like protecting the [rights of the] neighbour, fulfilling the sureties, obedience to virtue and opposition to arrogance; and beautify yourselves with excellent traits.
27. Choose for yourself the best from every character [trait], for indeed virtue is a habit.
28. Good character is [an embellishment] for the soul and good appearance is [a beautification] for the body.
29. Adopting a good character is the best [means of following the] religion.
30. Good character is the best companion and self-conceit is a hidden ailment.
31. Good character is from the best allotment and the most virtuous of qualities.
32. Good character is one of the two bounties [of Allah].
33. Good character is proof of an honourable ancestry.
34. Good character increases sustenance and makes companions feel at ease.
35. Good character is the cornerstone of all virtuous acts.
36. Good character brings about adoration and strengthens love.
37. The best character is the one that is furthest from obstinacy.
38. The best of qualities is the most agreeable of them.
39. The best of attributes is kindness.
40. The best of all qualities is truthfulness in speech and noble actions.
41. The foundation of belief is [adopting a] good character and adorning oneself with the truth.
42. I had, in the past, a brother-in-faith and his view of the world as something insignificant made him great in my eyes. He was above being controlled by the needs of his appetency and thus he never craved for what he could not get nor would he ask for more of what he got. He was silent most of the time but when he spoke, he silenced the other speakers and quenched the thirst [for answers] of questioners. He was [apparently] weak and feeble but at the time of battle he was like the lion of the forest or the serpent of the valley. He would not put forth an argument unless it was decisive. He would not accuse anyone in an excusable matter until he had heard his excuse. He would not mention any suffering except after recovering from it. He would do as he says and not say that which he does not do [himself]. Even when (or if) he could be exceeded in speaking, he could not be excelled in silence. He was more eager to listen than he was to speak. When two things came before him, he would see which of the two was closer to vain desire and would oppose it. You should [all] adopt these qualities, thus acquire them and compete with each other in them. And if you cannot acquire them, you should know that acquiring a little is better than giving up plenty.
43. Nothing gets constricted with good character.
44. One whose character is noble, his sustenance is increased.
45. One whose qualities are good, his companionship is pleasant.
46. One whose character is good, his ways become easy.
47. One whose character is good, more people adore him and feel at ease with him.
48. Allah, the Glorified, does not give a servant anything from the good of this world or the Hereafter but because of his good character and his good intention.
49. The best distinction is good character.
50. The best trait is [having a] good character.
51. The best [form of] faith is a beautiful character.
52. The hidden aspects of [one's] character are uncovered by [companionship and] social interaction.
53. The pinnacle of knowledge is distinguishing between character traits, manifesting the praiseworthy among them and suppressing the blameworthy among them.
54. The adornment of [all] traits is being careful [in fulfilling] the sureties.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

55. Six things are used to gauge the character of men: [their behaviour in times of] happiness and anger, security and fear, deprivation and desire.
56. You must adopt a good character for this will earn you adoration [of others].
57. In good character, there are treasures of [blessings and] sustenance.
58. Everything is possible except [changing and] transferring of natural dispositions [of character and personality].
59. How many a lowly person has been elevated by his good character!
60. Whoever does not make his character good, his companion will not benefit from him.
61. One whose attributes are not good, his [methods and] ways will not be praised.
62. There is no companion like good character.
63. There is no life more satisfying than [one lived with] good character.
64. When you see in others a quality which is objectionable, then keep similar qualities away from yourself.
65. Verily your natural disposition invites you towards that which you are familiar with.
66. Indeed these natural dispositions are different, and the best of them is the furthest of them from evil.
67. Verily only the dispositions of the virtuous are dispositions that have the potential of supporting good, so whenever they are laden with it, they carry it.
68. He ('a) said about the one whom he censured: If he falls sick he regrets having abandoned the work and if he is healthy, he feels secure and delays the work. When he is called to cultivate for this world, he works and when he is called to cultivate for the Hereafter, he is lazy. If he becomes wealthy, he turns arrogant and falls into vice and if he becomes poor, he despairs and becomes weak. If a favour is done to him, he is ungrateful and if he does a favour, he lengthens it and makes it seem like [a great favour and] an obligation. If an evil deed presents itself to him, he commits it with the excuse of seeking repentance [for it later] but when he decides to repent, he delays it and persists in sinning. If he experiences wellbeing, he assumes that he has repented. If he is distressed, he thinks [ill of Allah] and doubts [in Him]. If he falls ill he devotes himself and turns repentantly [to Allah] but if he regains his health, he forgets and returns [to his evil ways] and becomes emboldened in his injustice towards the servants [of Allah]. When he is secure, he is allured by the temptations of this world, so he forgets the Hereafter and is negligent of the Resurrection [on the Day of Judgment].
69. When you see in others a quality which is objectionable, then keep similar qualities away from yourself.
70. The worst quality is treachery.
71. A person's distance from vice is [the source of his] magnanimity.
72. Keep away from miserliness and hypocrisy, for these two are from the most reprehensible qualities.
73. Keep away from the worst of every character trait and struggle with yourself in keeping away from it, for indeed evil is obstinate.
74. Two attributes never come together in the heart of a believer: bad character and miserliness.
75. Bad character is inauspicious and offending a benefactor is wickedness.
76. Bad character is the worst companion.
77. Bad character alienates the near one and repels the distant one.
78. Bad character makes life bitter and is a torment for the soul.
79. The attributes that lead to evil are lying, stinginess, injustice and ignorance.
80. Bad character alienates the soul and removes amiability.
81. The worst qualities are dishonesty and hypocrisy.
82. The worst of habits is lying.
83. A vice may debase [the one who commits it].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

84. Every malady has a cure except bad character.
85. One who is rude by nature, his surroundings are deserted.
86. One whose character is bad torments his [own] soul.
87. One whose character is bad, his [own] family becomes fed up with him.
88. One who is of bad character is detested by his companion and associate.
89. One who is of bad character lacks friends and associates.
90. It is from bad character to be stingy and abusive in demanding your right.
91. Be wary of jesting, playing, excessive joking, [excessive] laughing, and vain talks.
92. Be cautious of the bellows of arrogance, the dominance of zealotry and the bigotry of the age of ignorance.
93. Beware of a wicked heart, corruption of intention, embarking on vice and the deception of [false] aspiration.
94. The most detestable of morals is treachery.
95. The most wicked characteristic is spite.
96. The worst of morals is adorning oneself with vices.
97. A dispraised character is from the fruits of ignorance.
98. How detestable are the traits of the vile and how good are the qualities of the honourable!
99. Being close to the people in their morals [and habits] is a safeguard from their malice.
100. There is no good in a character that is not adorned with forbearance.
101. There is no good in the trait of arrogance, haughtiness and pride.
102. There is no life for the one who has a bad character.
103. There is no loneliness worse than [that which is brought about by] bad character.
104. The one who has a bad character is very impetuous and has a bitter life.
105. A bad character is one of the two torments.
106. One who makes his character bad, torments his [own] soul.
107. One whose character is bad, his [own] family becomes fed up with him.
108. One whose character is bad, his sustenance is restricted.
109. One who does not affirm his past (i.e. the good character of his forefathers) with his present (i.e. his own good character), disgraces his predecessor and betrays his successor.

180. CREATION

1. Every creation is moving towards that which it has no knowledge of.

181. SECLUSION

1. The cause of immorality is seclusion.
2. Remaining in seclusion (when it is required to safeguard faith) is the habit of the righteous.

182. WINE

1. Abandoning the drinking of wine is [commanded as] a protection for the mind.

183. FIVE BAD QUALITIES

1. Five [types of people] are worthy of being humiliated: The one who interferes between two people when they have not involved him in their affair, the one who issues commands to the owner of the house [while] in his house, the one who approaches a dining table when he has not been invited to do

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

so, the one who continues talking when nobody is listening and the one who sits in the place where he has no right to sit.

2. Five qualities are detested from five [people]: Excessive licentiousness from scholars, greed from sages, stinginess from the wealthy, shamelessness from women and from the elders, adultery.

184. ANONYMITY

1. Verily in anonymity [and lack of fame and prominence] there is peace of mind.

185. FEAR

1. Fear [of Allah] is the imprisonment of the self from sins and its impediment from vices.
2. Fear of Allah in this world makes one safe from fear of Him in the Hereafter.
3. Fear [Allah] and you will be feared by the people.
4. Fear [Allah] and you will be feared; and do not act jokingly such that you are belittled.
5. The most fearful [of Allah] among you are the ones who know [Him] the most.
6. Fear [of Allah] is security.
7. Fear of the punishment of Allah is a quality of the God-wary.
8. Fear [of Allah] is the gown of the Gnostics.
9. Fear [of Allah] is the distinguishing feature of the believers.
10. When you fear the Creator, you flee towards Him.
11. The fruit of fear is security.
12. Fear your Lord and seek His mercy, He will save you from that which you fear [in this world] and will bestow [upon you] what you hope for.
13. Fear [Allah] and you will be safe, and do not [wait to] be safe so that you may fear [Him].
14. Fear your Lord with a fearing that distracts you from hope of His mercy, and have hope of His mercy with the hoping of one who does not feel safe from His fear.
15. The best action is striking a balance between hope [of His mercy] and fear [of His wrath].
16. Fear Allah with the fearing of one who busies his mind with contemplation, for indeed fear [of Allah] is the best place to find security and is a restraint for the self from vices.
17. Fear of Allah is the consolidation of faith.
18. Fear of Allah brings security for the one who is filled with it.
19. Fear Allah and He will protect you, and do not feel safe from Him [to the extent that you begin committing sins] so that He punishes you.
20. Many a fear turns into security.
21. There is many a frightening thing that you are not cautious of.
22. Blessed be the one who is careful of [not disobeying] his Lord and afraid of his sin.
23. Blessed be the one who enjoins upon himself the fear of his Lord and obeys Him in secret and in the open.
24. Blessed be the one who fills himself with fear [of Allah], belies [false] hopes and eschews missteps.
25. Blessed be the one who fears Allah and thus becomes safe [from chastisement in the Hereafter].
26. I am amazed at the one who knows Allah, how can his fear [of Him] not become intensified?!
27. I am amazed at the one who is incapable of warding off that which comes upon him, how does he feel safe from the one whom (or the thing which) he is afraid of?!
28. Fear [of Allah] is sufficient as knowledge.
29. Just as you hope, fear.
30. One who fears [Allah] is safe.
31. One who fears [Allah] gets up [to worship Him] in the night.
32. Whoever fears Allah, his knowledge is complete.
33. Whoever fears Allah, his [other] fears are reduced.
34. One whose fear [of Allah] increases, his affliction is reduced.
35. One who fears Allah does not quench his anger [by taking revenge].
36. One who fears his Lord refrains from being unjust [to anyone].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

37. One whose fear [of Allah] reduces, his affliction increases.
38. One who does not truly fear Allah will not gain His security.
39. One who fears Allah is protected by Allah, the Glorified, from everything.
40. The best form of worship is fear [and awe] of Allah.
41. The best barrier from sins is fear [of Allah].
42. The best means of [arriving at] security is fear [of Allah].
43. Let no fearful one fear anything other than his sins.
44. Do not fear anything other than your sins.
45. There is no knowledge like the fear [and awe] of Allah.
46. Fear [and awe] of Allah is the attribute of the felicitous.
47. One who fears the threat of Allah [to the evildoers] brings close to himself that which is far.
48. Fear [of Allah] is a backing.
49. One who fears [divine] punishment desists from evil actions.

Notes

1. Or in another reading: Fear [Allah] and you will be cautious [not to disobey Him].

186. FEARING OTHER THAN ALLAH

1. Whenever you fear the created [as opposed to the Creator], you flee from him.
2. When you are frightened of something then jump into it, for indeed the difficulty of safeguarding yourself from it is greater than [that of] entering into it.
3. He ('a) said about the one whom he censured: ...he has made his fear of men ready currency while his fear of the Creator a mere guarantee or promise [to be carried out later].
4. One who fears the people, Allah, the Glorified, makes him afraid of everything.

187. THE FEARFUL

1. The fearful one has no life.
2. How many a fearful person has been taken to a place of safety by his fear.
3. One who fears, fails.

188. FRIGHTENING OTHERS

1. One who does not frighten others will never be frightened [by anyone].
2. One who frightens you [from committing sins] in order to protect you [from punishment] is better than one who gives you a [false] sense of security on order that you may become frightened.

189. THE FRUSTRATED

1. For the frustrated and hopeless one there is the anguish of ruin [and loss].

190. GOOD

1. Good does not perish.
2. Good is easier [to do] than an evil action.
3. The bane of goodness is an evil companion.
4. When you make the intention of doing good, then execute it.
5. When you witness [a] good [deed] then take to it.
6. Three things consolidate that which is good: bestowing favours, guarding [one's] sureties and keeping ties with near relatives.
7. Consolidation of good is in acting on that which lasts and making light of that which perishes.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

8. Reform the evildoer with your good actions and guide [others] towards good by your beautiful [and kind] words.
9. Do good and do not consider any of it insignificant, for verily little of it is plenty and its doer is happy [in the Hereafter].
10. Increase your gladness for that which you have sent forth of good deeds and [increase] your sadness for that which you have missed from it.
11. The good deed that brings the quickest reward is piety.
12. Verily that which you send forth of good actions will be preserved for you and that which you delay [or postpone] will benefit other than you.
13. Indeed the best of good deeds are giving charity anonymously, being good with your parents and keeping ties with near relations.
14. Do good and do not commit evil acts, for the one who performs a good deed is better than it and the one who commits an evil act is more evil than it.
15. Do good deeds as much as you can, for better than the good deed is the one who does it.
16. Indeed, the most perceptive of seers is one whose gaze penetrates into good actions.
17. The consolidation of good is in seeking advice and acting upon words of the sincere adviser.
18. The consolidation of good is in making friendship for the sake of Allah and making enmity for the sake of Allah; [in] loving for the sake of Allah and hating for the sake of Allah.
19. Consolidation of good is in [performing] virtuous actions.
20. Sometimes good may come upon you from where you least expect it.
21. Whoever wears [the garment of] virtue disrobes himself of evil.
22. One who does good has [actually] started with [gaining its benefit] himself.
23. One who plants good, reaps reward.
24. Whoever does not know how to distinguish good from evil, then he is [actually] from the beasts.
25. One who does not know the benefit of a good action will not be capable of performing it.
26. One who sends forth a good deed will find it [in the Hereafter].
27. One who falls short in performing good deeds, loses and regrets.
28. From the signs of goodness is refraining from harming others.
29. The good deed that is followed by hellfire is not a good deed.
30. Never count as evil that through which you realized good.
31. Do not perform any good action in order to show off and do not abandon it out of shame.
32. None of you should ever say: 'indeed there is one who is more worthy of doing the good action than me,' for it will, by Allah, become that way. Verily for good and evil there are adherents, so whenever you leave it, its adherents perform it in your place.
33. That which you send forth of good deeds is [preserved] with the One who does not diminish [its] reward and that which you commit from evil actions is [preserved] with the One who is not incapable of [meting out] punishment.
34. The essential prerequisite of good action is taking the initiative in [performing] it.
35. The basis of every good deed is obedience to Allah, the Glorified.
36. The key to goodness is renouncing evil.
37. An evil [action] that does not last is better than a good [deed] that does not last.
38. The one who seeks goodness through evil action, his mind and senses are corrupt.
39. He who seeks good will triumph by it.
40. The determination to do good extinguishes the fire of evil.
41. The planter of the tree of good reaps the sweetest fruit.
42. You will never realize good until you renounce evil.
43. There is nothing better than [a] good [deed] except its reward.
44. Goodness is not in having more wealth and children, rather goodness is only in possessing more knowledge and greater forbearance.
45. One who advances good, gains.
46. The doer of [a] good [deed] is better than it.
47. The good action is a lasting store and a pure fruitage.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

48. Send forth good actions and you will gain [in the Hereafter]; purify your actions [by performing them sincerely for Allah] and you will be felicitous.
49. Indeed, being a follower in good is [much] better for you than being a leader in evil.
50. Nobody will ever be given the reward of a good action except the one who performs it.

191. GOOD OF THIS WORLD AND THE HEREAFTER

1. Four [qualities] are such that whoever they have been given to has been given the good of this world and the Hereafter: truthful speech, fulfilling the trust, abstinence from consuming what is forbidden and good character.
2. Three [traits] are such that whoever possesses them has been bestowed with the good of this world and the Hereafter. They are: being satisfied with what has been decreed [by Allah], patience in the face of hardship and thankfulness in times of ease [and prosperity].

192. SEEKING WHAT IS BEST

1. Seek what is best and do not chose what you want, for how many a person who has chosen what he wanted and found his own destruction in it!
2. When you embark on something, seek what is best from it.
3. He who seeks what is best [in his actions] does not regret.

193. THE VIRTUOUS

1. The practice of the virtuous ones is polite speech and spreading peace.

194. CHOICE

1. One whose choice is bad, his results become ugly.
2. Some bad choices are seeking to overpower one's equals and making enmity with people.
3. One of the best choices is accompanying the virtuous.
4. Some of the bad choices are fighting [and seeking to overpower] one's equals, unveiling an enemy and showing hostility towards one who is able to do harm.
5. One of the most excellent choices and best precautions [and supports] is for you to be just in your ruling (or judgment) and to carry it out among the special and the ordinary [people] equally.
6. From the best of choices is adorning oneself with selflessness.
7. From the good choices [one makes] is keeping company with the virtuous and keeping a distance from the wicked.
8. The worst choice is being satisfied with deficiency.

195. THE CHOICE OF ALLAH

1. Whoever does not get reformed by that which Allah has chosen [for him] will not be reformed by what he chooses for himself.

196. TREACHERY AND DISLOYALTY

1. Keep away from treachery for it is [a cause of] turning away from Islam.
2. The cornerstone of hypocrisy is treachery.
3. The peak of ingratitude is disloyalty.
4. The highest form of treachery is the treachery of a beloved friend and the breaking of pledges.
5. One who acts with treachery has done injustice to the trust [that was entrusted to him].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

6. From the most grievous forms of treachery is being treacherous with trusts or deposits [that one has been entrusted with].
7. Do not act treacherously towards one who trusts you, even if he is disloyal with you, and do not disgrace your enemy, even if he disgraces you.
8. Treachery and brotherhood do not go together.
9. Keep away from treachery for it is the worst offence, and verily the treacherous one is surely punished with fire for his treachery.
10. The worst treachery is treachery against the nation.
11. Treachery is betrayal.
12. Treachery is the brother of dishonesty.
13. Treachery is the double of deceit.
14. Treachery is the cornerstone of hypocrisy.
15. Treachery is an indication of lack of piety and absence of religiosity.
16. When treacheries (or offenses) become manifest, blessings are taken away.
17. Unwelcome are the faces that are not seen except in every evil situation.

197. THE TREACHEROUS

1. The treacherous person is one who busies himself with other than his self and his 'today' is worse than his 'yesterday'.
2. The enticer [towards deviance] and the treacherous one are alike.
3. The treacherous person has no loyalty in him.
4. From the signs of being forsaken [by Allah] is considering the treacherous to be trustworthy.

Notes

1. Or in another reading: The discloser [of secrets] and the treacherous one are alike.

198. THE DILIGENT AND THE HARDWORKING

1. Many a diligent person also loses (or causes loss).
2. Many a person toils for the one who is not grateful to him.

199. FOLLOWING UP MATTERS

1. One who follows up [and thinks about] matters [that have passed], gets perplexed.

200. ONE WHO TURNS BACK AND THE ONE WHO MOVES FORWARD

1. Never hold on to one who turns back and do not separate from the one who moves forward.
2. It may be that sometimes the one who turns back moves forward and the one who moves forward turns back.

201. PLANNING

1. Little [done] with planning is more lasting than a lot done with wastefulness.
2. The most manifest sign of abundant intelligence is good planning.
3. Planning comes with consideration and consideration comes with contemplation.
4. Planning is half of the assistance.
5. Planning before action saves one from regret.
6. Planning before action saves one from error.
7. Good planning and keeping away from wastefulness are from good politics.
8. Good planning makes little wealth grow while bad planning causes abundant wealth to perish.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

9. The cause of ruin is bad planning.
10. Bad planning is the key to poverty.
11. One whose planning is bad, his ruin is hastened.
12. One whose planning is delayed, his destruction is expedited.
13. One whose planning is bad, his estimation is nullified.
14. One whose planning is bad, his destruction is in his planning.
15. There is no wisdom like planning.
16. There is no benefit in the planning of one who is not obeyed.

202. DESERTION AND ABANDONMENT

1. Keep away from abandonment, desertion and severing of ties with near relatives.

203. TURNING BACKWARD

1. It is seldom that one who turns back [and retreats] returns to the front.
2. From the signs of turning backward is accompanying the vile.
3. From the signs of turning backward is thinking ill of the one who gives you good advice.
4. Turning backward is evinced by four things: bad planning, foul extravagance, lack of consideration and too many excuses.
5. The merits in advancing forward are the demerits in turning backward.

204. ENTRANCE

1. One who enters into a place of evil is [suspected and] accused.
2. For everyone who enters [into an unfamiliar place] there is consternation and perplexity.
3. For everyone who enters there is [a feeling of] consternation, so begin with salaam
4. Everyone who arrives has [a feeling of] perplexity, so make him comfortable with [kind] words.

Notes

1. The Islamic greeting: Salāmun ‘alaykum.

205. GRADUALLY DRAWING CLOSER TO DESTRUCTION

1. Of all people, the person who needs to be most careful is the one who is most safe from abrupt changes [as this may be a means of gradually being drawn to his destruction].
2. How many a person is gradually drawn to his destruction through the good that is done to him.

206. STUDY

1. One who does not continue his study does not acquire deep understanding [of his subject].

207. RECTIFICATION AND MAKING AMENDS

1. One who makes amends is on the brink of righteousness.
2. Rectify at the end of your life that which you have neglected [and lost] earlier on and you will make your place of return a happy one.
3. Proper rectification [of one's mistakes] is the symbol of righteousness.
4. Successful is the one who reforms his current actions and makes amends for his past mistakes.
5. One who makes amends [for his past mistakes] reforms [himself].
6. One who rectifies his [past] mistakes reforms [himself].
7. How far is making amends [for something] from [its initial] loss!

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

8. Hastening rectification is reformation.

208. AMICABLENESS

1. Be amicable with the people and you will be secure from their tribulations and will remain safe from their sly plots.
2. Be amicable with the people and you will enjoy their brotherhood; meet them with cheerfulness and you will cause their malice to die away.
3. Be courteous to your enemy and be sincere with your close friend, [by this] you will protect [your] brotherhood and safeguard [your] magnanimity.
4. The cornerstone of wisdom is being amicable with the people.
5. The soundness of life is in being amicable [with people].
6. One who is amicable with people remains safe.
7. One who is not improved by the virtue of amicableness becomes improved by the evil of retribution.
8. One who is amicable with the people is protected from their plotting.
9. He who is not amicable with the one who is above him will not realize his goal.
10. Being amicable with people is one of the best actions
11. Being amicable with a fool is one of the most severe difficulties.
12. Being amicable is the most praiseworthy attribute.

209. SUPPLICATION AND THE SUPPLICANT

1. Supplication for a beggar is one of the two charities [that one can give].
2. The most piercing arrow is the supplication of the oppressed.
3. The most incapable of all people is the one who is unable to supplicate.
4. The kindness of Allah does not annul His wisdom; it is for this reason that not all supplications are answered.
5. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has wraths and chastisements, so if [any of] it descends upon you, repel it with supplication; for indeed nothing can repel tribulation except supplication. 6. Supplication is the weapon of the close friends [of Allah]. 7. If any one of you wishes that he should never ask Allah, the Glorified, for anything but that He grants it to him, then he should lose hope in people and should not have hope in anyone other than Allah, the Glorified.
9. When you have any need [that you wish for] from Allah, the Glorified, then start by sending salutations on the Prophet (s) and then ask Allah for your need, for Allah, the Most High, is too generous to fulfil one of the two supplications that are made to Him and refuse the other.
10. Through supplication, tribulations are repelled.
11. Sometimes you may ask for something but you are not granted it, rather you are given [something] better than it.
12. The weapon of a believer is supplication.
13. Ask Allah for forgiveness, well-being and good success [in carrying out His ordinances].
14. Make your supplication sincere, for this makes it more worthy of a response.
15. Not every supplication is answered.
16. One who is given the [opportunity of] supplication will not be deprived of the response.
17. Whoever calls upon [and supplicates to] Allah, He answers him.
18. The one who is afflicted by severe tribulation is no more in need of supplication than the one who is doing well but is not secure from tribulations.
19. What a good weapon supplication is!
20. Do not reckon that your supplication is being answered [too] slowly while you have obstructed its path with [your] sins.
21. Never get disheartened by a delayed answer to [your] supplication, for indeed that which is granted is commensurate with the intention, and sometimes the answer might be delayed so that it may result in a greater reward for the seeker and a more bountiful grant for the recipient.
22. Whoever asks Allah, He grants to him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

23. There is nothing more beloved to Allah, the Glorified, than being beseeched.
24. Do not ask [from anyone] other than Allah, the Glorified, for indeed if He grants [your wishes to] you, He honours you [at the same time] and if He withholds from you, He does it for your own welfare [and benefit].
25. Allah, spare our lives and their lives, restore the ties between us and them, rescue them [and guide them] from their misguidance, until those who are ignorant of the truth may recognize it and those are persistent in sinning and disloyalty [and in their enmity towards us] may desist from it.
26. Whoever knocks on the door of Allah, it is opened for him.
27. The one who supplicates without action is like a bow without a bowstring.

Notes

1. This was the supplication taught by Amīr al-Mu'minīn ('a) to his men during the Battle of Siffin.

210. THE CALL

1. Deaf is the ear that does not hear the call [of guidance].
2. Two calls never differ but that one of them leads to misguidance.

211. THE GUIDE

1. Deviation of the guide is the destruction of the seeker of guidance.

212. SERIOUSLY ILL

1. How many [times has] a seriously ill person been saved while a healthy person died!

213. THE DESPICABLE

1. One who comes near the despicable is accused.

214. LOATHSOME ACTIONS AND TRAITS

1. Disassociating oneself from loathsome actions and traits subdues the enemy.

215. THIS WORLD

1. This world is neither clean for any drinker [to drink from] nor is it loyal to any owner.
2. This world is filled with tribulations [and] stricken with tragedies and calamities.
3. This world is fleeting and perishing; [even] if it remains for you, you will not remain for it.
4. This world is smaller, more lowly and more insignificant than for one to keep grudges in [and because of] it.
5. This world is a prison for the believer, death is his gift and Paradise is his [permanent] abode.
6. This world is a Paradise for the disbeliever, death is his dispatcher and hell is his [permanent] dwelling.
7. This world is a deal of the [one who has been] defrauded and human being is defrauded by it.
8. If this world unfolds, it opens up and when it disperses, it departs.
9. This world takes turns, so be moderate in seeking it, and be patient until your turn comes to you.
10. This world is a present offering, [both] the virtuous and the vicious partake of it, but the Hereafter is the Abode of Truth wherein a [wise and] powerful king rules.
11. This world is [like] the shadow of clouds and the dream that is seen while asleep.
12. Reliance on this world, despite what is seen of its vicissitudes, is ignorance.
13. This world is full of misfortunes. It afflicts with disasters and adversities.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

14. The conditions of this world are based on convention whereas the conditions of the Hereafter are based on merit.
15. This world is [made up of] agonizing hardships, painful deaths and sharp lessons (or drastic changes).
16. This world is a trap for the souls and settling place of every detriment and misery.
17. This world is a hindering deception, a vanishing mirage and a bent pillar.
18. The times of this world, even if they prolong, are short; and its enjoyments, even if they are many, are few [when compared to the Hereafter].
19. One who desires it (this world), it troubles him and makes him wretched.
20. The winner is one who sells his world for his Hereafter.
21. Put all your effort and endeavour in gaining salvation from the place of wretchedness and punishment and deliverance from the place of tribulation and chastisement.
22. Reject this world as a dispraised thing, for it has rejected one who loves it more passionately than you.
23. Remove [the love of] this world from your hearts before your bodies [are made to] leave it, for in it you are tested and for other than it have you been created.
24. Draw near to the one to whom this world has yielded [itself], for indeed he is more worthy of prosperity [than the one who follows this world and its allure].
25. Flee from this world and divert your hearts from it, for it is the prison of a believer - his share of it is little and his mind is sickened by it and his sight is dulled in it.
26. Look at this world as those who are uninterested in it would look at it, having diverted themselves from it, for it will, by Allah, shortly turn out its inhabitants and cause grief to the one who is living in luxury and the one who feels safe.
27. Be wary of the deception of this world, for it always takes back that which it beguiles with from its charms and drives away the one who feels at ease and is settled in it.
28. Reject this world which will [shortly] abandon you even if you do not like to leave it, and which will make your bodies [grow] old even if you would like to have them rejuvenated.
29. Be cautious of the vanishing desirable and the perishing beloved.
30. Be cautious of this world, for it is the net of the devil and the [place of] corruption of faith.
31. Keep away from love of this world, for it is the root of every misdeed and the source of every affliction.
32. Be careful that death does not descend upon you while you are a fugitive [who has run away] from Allah in your seeking [the pleasures of] this world.
33. Beware of selling your share from your Lord and your rank with Him for the worthless vanities of this world.
34. Do not be infatuated with this world, for it brings you wretchedness and tribulation and impels you to sell the eternal for the transient.
35. Beware of letting your [lower] self overwhelm you in that which it presumes [of this world] while you do not overcome it in that which you are certain [of the Hereafter], for indeed this is from the gravest of evils.
36. Do not be deceived by what you see the people of this world inclined towards and what they rush greedily after, for Allah has informed you about it and has exposed its faults and evils for you.
37. Do not let this world get the better of you, for indeed its present is bitter and its future is distressful.
38. Verily this world is an abode where no one remains safe except by renouncing its pleasures and none is saved from it by anything that is part of it.
39. Is there no freeman who would forsake this leftover for those who deserve it?
40. Verily this world has elapsed and is on the verge of expiry; its good has been shunned, its novelty has become old and its fat has become lean.
41. Indeed, what must one who has been created for the Hereafter do with this world? And what can one do with wealth when it will be taken away from him shortly while its accountability and consequences remain with him?
42. Verily today is the time for preparation and tomorrow is the race; the prize is Paradise and [at] the [other] extreme is hell.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

43. Verily that which was advancing towards this world has turned back from it, and that which had turned back has advanced towards it; and the righteous servants of Allah have decided to depart and have sold the little of this world that does not last for the abundance of the Hereafter that does not perish.
44. Do you not see the people of this world passing the evenings and mornings in different states? The dead being mourned and the living being condoled, the victim being afflicted and the visitor visiting him [to ask about his condition], and another who is sacrificing himself; and the one who is seeking this world while death seeks him; and the one who is heedless but not neglected; and those who remain behind continue to follow the footsteps of the those who preceded [them].
45. The gravest of errors is loving this world.
46. The gravest of afflictions and wretchedness is [caused by] infatuation with this world.
47. The people of this world are the target of calamities, the dispersal of afflictions and the spoils of adversities.
48. The most felicitous of all people is one who abandons the perishing pleasures [of this world] for the lasting pleasures [of the Hereafter].
49. The happiest of all people with this world is the one who abandons it and the happiest of them with the Hereafter is the one who works for it.
50. Verily the interior of this world is dead and its exterior is sick.
51. Verily today there is action without accounting and tomorrow [in the Hereafter] there is accounting without action.
52. Verily the seriousness of this world is jest, its honour is disgrace and its height is lowliness.
53. Verily this world is the abode of troubles, plague, termination and transition; its pleasures do not equal its displeasures, its fortunes do not equate to its misfortunes and its risings do not substitute its collapses.
54. Verily the one who sells the Garden of the [permanent] Abode for this transient world, his effort will be futile and his transaction will have made a loss.
55. Verily this world is passing you by in its normal fashion, and you are connected to the Hereafter.
56. Verily this world is the corruptor of faith and the dispossessor of certitude; it is the source of [all] troubles and root of tribulations.
57. Indeed the similitude of this world and the Hereafter is like a man who has two wives, when he pleases one of them he angers the other.
58. Verily the one whom this world has deceived through unfeasible aspirations and cheated with false hopes is made to lose his eyesight and get covered by blindness, and it cuts him off from the Hereafter and makes him enter into places of destruction.
59. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has an angel who calls out every day: "O people of the world, procreate for death, construct for destruction and gather up for departure!"
60. Verily those who are pleased with this world tomorrow are the ones who run away from it today.
61. Verily the one who is more possessive of this world than of the Hereafter and is more overwhelmed by the affairs of this world than those of the next, has sold the everlasting for the transient and has exchanged the eternal for the temporal; he has destroyed his soul and has accepted for it the perishing and short-lived while causing it to deviate from the clear path [of guidance].
62. Verily this world is the abode of pain, annihilation, vicissitudes and lessons, and the place of trials and tribulations.
63. Verily this world is the abode of adversities, one who is hastened in it [and dies earlier] suffers the agony [of death] himself, and one who is granted respite in it suffers the pain [of losing] of his loved ones.
64. Verily this world has turned back and announced its departure, and indeed the Hereafter has advanced and is about to emerge.
65. Verily this world is inverted [and] reversed, its pleasures are [causes of] embitterment, its gifts cause distress, its life is [full of] pain and its continuity ends in annihilation. It defiantly runs away from its seeker, it causes its rider to fall, it betrays the one who trusts it and disturbs the one who is content with it. Indeed its accumulation leads to separation and its attachment leads to severance.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

66. Verily it is from the abasement of this world before Allah that He is not disobeyed [anywhere] except in it and that which is with Him cannot be attained except by abandoning it.
67. Verily this world is like a snake, its feel is soft [but] its venom is deadly, so turn away from that which appeals to you of it for the little time that it is with you, and be most cautious of it when you are most inclined towards it.
68. This world of yours is more lowly in my view than the [decayed] bone of a pig in the hand of a leper and more inferior than a leaf in the mouth of a locust; what does 'Ali have to do with bounties that will perish and pleasures that will not last?
69. Verily this world is like a ghoul, it misguides the one who follows it and destroys the one who responds to it. It is quick in its disappearance and imminent in its transference.
70. Verily this world approaches as a seeker would approach and turns back as one who flees turns back, it arrives as the kings arrive and departs as the hasty departs.
71. Verily this world is an abode unfit for permanent residence, and is not the house for foraging. Its good is trifling, its evil is ready at hand, its authority is snatched away and its habitation faces desolation.
72. Verily this world is ungrateful and stubborn, abandoning and disavowing, attracting and distracting; its condition is [constantly] changing, its calmness is shaking, its honour is disgrace, its seriousness is jest, its abundance is deficiency, its height is lowliness, its people are moving and following, reaching and departing. It is the abode of war, plunder, pillage and destruction.
73. Verily this world is a hindering deception, a disappearing shadow and a bent pillar, it connects bounty with calamity and aspiration with death.
74. Verily the life of this world is short, its good is little, its approach is deceptive, its turning away is agonizing, its pleasures are transient and its consequences are lasting.
75. Verily this world is an abode, the beginning of which is pain and its end is annihilation. In its lawful there is accounting and in its forbidden there is punishment. One who is wealthy in it is tested and one who is poor in it is sorrowful.
76. Indeed this world is an abode of departure and a place of discomfort. Its resident has to depart and its dweller has to leave; its glitter is deceiving, its speech is untrue, its wealth is looted and its valuables are plundered. Beware, this world attracts and then turns away, it is unruly and stubborn, it cheats and betrays.
77. Verily this world is the abode of tribulations and the place of trials, whoever seeks it is evade by it and whoever keeps away from it, it advances towards him; the one who looks at it gets blinded by it and the one who looks through it, gets enlightened by it.
78. Verily this world brings the appointed terms closer, takes aspirations further away, causes people to perish and changes circumstances. One who tries to overcome it is overpowered by it and one who struggle against it is knocked down by it, whereas it follows the one who renounces it and comes to the one who forsakes it.
79. Verily this world wears out the bodies, renews hopes, brings death near and takes aspirations far away. Every time its inhabitant becomes contented and pleased with it, it sends him back to adversity.
80. Verily the good of this world is insignificant, its evil is ready at hand, its pleasures are little and its regret is long. Its bounties are connected with misery, its happiness is linked with misfortune, its benefit is joined with harm and its sweetness is mixed with bitterness.
81. Verily this world is a deceiving beguiler, it gives and takes back, clothes and then unclothes; its comforts do not last, its hardships do not cease and its calamities do not end.
82. Indeed this world is like a net that becomes twisted around the one who desires it and retreats from the one who turns away from it, so don't incline towards it with your heart and do not turn to face it such that it catches you in its net and flings you into its destruction.
83. Verily this world gives and takes back, yields and spurns, forsakes and shows friendship, entices and disheartens; the felicitous turn away from it while the wretched desire it.
84. Indeed this world is an abode known for [its] tribulation and fraught with disloyalty. Its states do not last and those who inhabit it do not remain safe. Life in it is dispraised and security in it is non-existent.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

85. Verily this world is [like] the shadow of clouds, the dream that is seen while asleep, the joy that is linked with sadness and the honey that is mixed with poison. [It is] the despoiler of bounties, the devourer of nations, the bringer of [divine] retribution.
86. Neither is this world faithful with any companion nor is it clean for any drinker [to drink from]. Its bounties shift and its circumstances change, its pleasures perish and its consequences remain; so turn away from it before it turns away from you, and substitute it [for something better] before it substitutes you.
87. Verily this world sometimes advances towards the ignorant by convention and turns its back on the intelligent despite [his] merit, so if something of it comes to you with ignorance or you lose something sought with intelligence, then do not let that push you to desiring ignorance or being uninterested in intelligence, for that will degrade you and destroy you.
88. Indeed one of the troubles of this world is that it does not remain in its [present] state and is not free from alteration. One part is rectified by the corruption of another part and one party is [made] happy at the expense of [another] party. So being in it is a danger and trusting it is a risk, remaining in it permanently is impossible and reliance on it is misguidance.
89. Verily this world is quick in changing, frequent in moving, intense in treachery and persistent in craftiness, its situations are altered abruptly, its bounties change, its comfort is insufficient, its pleasures become bitter, its seeker is humiliated and its rider stumbles.
90. Indeed this world is sweet and fresh, surrounded by [lustful] desires; it delights with little, and is adorned with hopes and embellished with vanities. Its exhilaration does not last and its afflictions cannot be avoided. It is very deceitful, harmful, volatile, evanescent, perishing, transient, devouring and destructive.
91. Verily the outer appearance of this world delights while its reality annihilates. It has been adorned by vanities and entices by its embellishments. It is an abode which is lowly before its Lord, so its lawful has been mixed with its forbidden, its good with its evil and its sweetness with its bitterness. Allah has not cleansed it for His friends nor has He withheld it from His enemies.
92. Indeed, with every drink of this world there is choking and with every food eaten in it there is blockage of the throat. No blessing is obtained from it except by separation from another [blessing], and a person does not come to a [new] day of his life except by leaving behind another for it, and no sign of him is left alive in it but that [another] sign of him passes away.
93. Verily this world is the abode of truth for the one who believes it [to be transient], the abode of wellbeing for the one who recognizes it [as such], the abode of riches for the one who takes provisions from it [for the Hereafter] and the abode of good counsel for the one who takes advice from it. It has announced its separation and proclaimed its departure. It has declared its own [impending] death and [the death] of its inhabitants. It exemplifies for them, by its tribulations, the tribulation [of the Hereafter] and creates desire in them, by its pleasures, for the pleasures [of the Hereafter]. It brings ease in the evening and brings grief in the morning through desire, apprehension, alarm and warning. People dispraise it on the morning of their regret [on the Day of Reckoning] while others praise it. It reminded them [of the next life] so they remembered it. It related to them [things of the next life] and they believed. It admonished them and they took advice from it through [its] changes and lessons.
94. Indeed this world is the limit of the sight of the blind person who sees nothing that is beyond it, while the one endowed with insight sees through it and knows that there is an abode beyond it. Thus the discerning one wishes to depart from it while the blind one wishes to remain in it; the discerning one takes provisions from it while the blind one accumulates provisions in it.
95. Verily this world has people who possess preserved treasures that are disparaged and cast away by you. The religion is opened up by them just as one of you would open the lid of his cooking pot. They stick together like [a swarm of] locusts and destroy the tyrants of the lands.
96. Indeed this world and the Hereafter are two unequal enemies and two separate ways, so whoever loves this world and befriends it, hates the Hereafter and takes it as an enemy. They are like the East and the West and one who walks between the two, such that whenever he comes closer to one [direction], he distances himself from the other. After all, they are both like fellow-wives [seeking to pull their husband only towards themselves].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

97. Verily this world is a means of distraction from the Hereafter. Its companion obtains nothing from it except that it opens for him [the door of] greed for it and attachment towards it.
98. Indeed Allah, the Exalted, has made this world for that which comes after it, and in it He has tests its inhabitants so that He may know who from among of them is best in conduct. We have not been created for this world and we have not been commanded to strive for it, rather we have only been placed in it in order to be tested and [so] that we may work in it for what is [to come] after it.
99. Verily this world is a place for which destruction has been ordained, and departure from it has been destined for its inhabitants. It is sweet and green [for the one who desires it]. It hastens towards its seeker and attaches itself to the heart of its gazer. So depart from it with the best provision that is available for you, and do not ask in it more than what suffices, and do not seek from it more than what you require.
100. This world was neither created for you as a permanent abode nor as a place to settle, rather it has only been made as a passage for you so that you may acquire from it the provisions of good deeds for the abode of [permanent] settlement. Therefore be alert and do not let its temporary pleasures deceive you or its temptations beguile you.
101. Safety in this world is not acquired except by its renunciation. People are tested in it through tribulations so those who have taken from it for its sake will be removed from it [by death] and will be made accountable for it. And whatever they have taken from it for the other world, they will go to it and will stay in it. For the wise one this world is like a shade at one moment it expands until [the next moment] it shrinks and extends until it diminishes. And Allah has left you with no excuse by forbidding from it, and he has warned and cautioned you about it so He has apprised you of it.
102. This world betrays.
103. This world humiliates.
104. This world is limited [in duration], the Hereafter is eternal.
105. When lastingness is not found, then bounties are short-lived.
106. Perpetuity is not granted to [any] one who loves [and wishes for] it.
107. Inclination towards this world despite what is seen of its fickleness is [a sign of] ignorance.
108. Every perishing thing is insignificant.
109. Do not elevate the one who has been elevated by this world.
110. People of delusion [who have been deluded by this world], what has made you attached to an abode the goodness of which is trifling, the evil of which is ready at hand, the bounties of which are snatched away, the peaceful of which are fought against, the owners of which are slaves and the heritage of which is abandoned.
111. world, O world! Get away from me! Is it me that you present yourself to? Or is it I that you are eager for? May your time never come! Deceive some other person. I have no need for you. I have divorced you thrice, after which there is no reunion. Your life is short, your significance is little and your hope is worthless. Alas! How meagre the provision, how long the way, how distant the journey and how great the destination!
112. servants of the world and those who work for it! When you are selling and buying in the day time and tossing in your beds and sleeping at night, and all the while you are oblivious to the Hereafter and postpone [good] actions, then when do you think of guidance and prepare your provisions, and when do you become concerned about the affairs of the Hereafter?
113. people! Renounce the pleasures of this world, for indeed its life is short and its goodness is insignificant. It is a house of [inevitable] departure a place of discomfort. It brings closer the appointed terms and cuts short aspirations. Indeed it turns away and shuns [those who are after it], it is unruly and stubborn, it cheats and betrays.
114. This world misguides.
115. This world harms, the Hereafter delights.
116. This world is a loss [for those who seek it].
117. This world is [obtained] by convention, the Hereafter is [gained] by merit.
118. This world is [filled] with hope.
119. This world is transient.
120. This world is a waning shadow.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

121. This world is a market of loss.
122. This world is the plantation of evil.
123. This world is a laugh for the one whose tears flow [in sadness] (or for the one who is deluded by it).
124. This world is the abode of tribulations.
125. This world is the abode of the wretched.
126. This world is the corridor to the Hereafter.
127. This world is the divorcée of the sagacious.
128. The transient world is the desire of the filthy.
129. Being pleased with this world is foolishness.
130. Being dazzled by this world [and being proud because of it] is stupidity.
131. This world deceives, harms and passes by.
132. This world is the place of catastrophes.
133. The one who is attached to this world is cut off [from Allah].
134. This world is the aspiration of the wretched.
135. The transient world is the delusion [or the deluder] of the unintelligent.
136. This world is the place where the intellects fall.
137. This world is the place of vicissitudes.
138. This world is the abode of tribulation.
139. This world is the prize of the unintelligent.
140. Being occupied with the transient is a waste of time.
141. Longing for this world brings about hatred.
142. This world is like the day that has passed and the month that has elapsed.
143. This world is the abode of strangers and the dwelling of the wretched.
144. Infatuation with this world is the greatest trial.
145. Just as [wealth and] authority comes towards you, it turns away from you.
146. Just as this world mends, it [also] breaks.
147. The means of this world are discontinuous and its loans (i.e. things that human beings are bestowed with temporarily like status, wealth etc.) are [to be] returned.
148. This world is a dream and being deceived by it is [a cause of] regret.
149. This world is a poison that is ingested by the one who does not know it.
150. This world is the source of evil and the place of deception.
151. If you have understood your affair or have been able to recognize yourself then turn away from this world and be uninterested in it, for it is the abode of the wretched and not the abode of the felicitous. Its splendour is spurious, its beauty is deceptive, its clouds are scattered (i.e. its sources of abundance are scarce) and its bounties are taken back.
152. If you are after [abundant] bliss than free yourselves from the abode of wretchedness.
153. If you love Allah then remove from your hearts the love of this world.
154. If you make your [life in this] world a means of following your religion, you will have saved [both] your religion and your world, and you will be among the successful in the Hereafter.
155. Verily I have divorced this world thrice uncompromisingly, [such that] there is no return to it for me, and I have released it completely.
156. Indeed, if you approach this world you have turned your back [from the Hereafter].
157. Indeed, when you turn your back on this world, you have approached [the Hereafter].
158. Verily you have not been created for this world, so renounce it and turn away from it.
159. If you work for this world, your transaction will have made a loss.
160. Verily you will never meet Allah, the Glorified, with an action more harmful to you than love for this world.
161. Indeed, if you crave after this world, you will waste your lives for that which you will not remain for and that which will not remain for you.
162. Indeed, this world is only a trap into which those who do not recognize it fall.
163. This world is only [a place of] varying circumstances, changing situations and marked targets.
164. This world is only a corpse and those who establish bonds of brotherhood for [acquiring] it are similar to dogs, such that their brotherhood does not prevent them from harming each other for it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

165. The people [who seek] of this world are just like howling dogs or starving predators growling at each other. The mighty among them eat the meek and the big among them crush the small. Some are like tied cattle and some are like untied cattle that have lost their wits and are running in every direction.
166. You are only like the standing [and ready] riders who do not know when they will be ordered to march.
167. This world is only an enjoyment for a few days, then it will disappear like the mirage disappears and pass by like the clouds pass by.
168. Indeed, the only share of the earth for every one of you is the length and breadth of his own stature, [of the grave] wherein he would lie on his cheeks covered with dust.
169. Indeed this world is only the abode of passage and the Hereafter is the abode of [permanent] residence. So take [provisions] from the abode of passage for the abode of residence and do not tear your veils in front of the one who knows your secrets.
170. The example of those who have known this world is like a group of travellers who abandon a drought-stricken place and set off for a fruitful and fertile place. Then they endure the difficulties of the path, the hardships of the journey and the coarseness of the food in order to reach their fields of plenty and the place of their [permanent] residence.
171. Indeed man (in this world) is only a target that is struck by [the arrows of] death and a booty that is rushed towards by tribulations and calamities.
172. The bane of the soul is being infatuated with this world.
173. When this world comes towards a servant, it covers him with the merits of others and when it turns its back from him it snatches away his [own] merits.
174. When something of this world slips away from you then do not despair, and when you do good, do not put others under obligation.
175. This world ends with annihilation.
176. By preferring the love of this transient world, one ends up in an unpleasant state in the Hereafter.
177. How bad an abode this world is!
178. The worst choice is exchanging the everlasting with the transient.
179. Your remaining [in this world] is towards annihilation and your annihilation [from this world] is towards eternity.
180. Sell that which perishes for that which remains and exchange the wretchedness of this world for the abundant bounties of the Hereafter.
181. When you are deprived of something in this world, take comfort in the fact that it would have been with you [only] for a little while.
182. The fruit of infatuation with this world is great tribulation.
183. The one who seeks refuge in this world is ruined and the one who takes his fill from it is destroyed.
184. The bounty of this world is transient, its comfort is [marred by] trouble, its soundness is destruction and its gifts are taken away.
185. Love of this world is the source of every misdeed.
186. Love of this world is the source of trials and the root of tribulations.
187. Love of this world gives rise to avarice.
188. Love of this world corrupts the intellect, preoccupies the heart from listening to [words of] wisdom and leads to a painful chastisement [in the Hereafter].
189. The sweetness of this world leads to the bitterness of the Hereafter and an unpleasant ending.
190. The sweets of this world are like myrrh, its foods are poisons and its means are worn-out [and weak] ropes.
191. The living of this world are prone to death and its healthy are prone to sicknesses and the target of [the arrow of] death.
192. Wretchedness, annihilation, destruction and ruin have been decreed for the people of this world.
193. This world has been surrounded with lustful desires, liked for its immediate enjoyments, embellished with deceptions and sweetened with aspirations.
194. Wage war against yourselves for [keeping away from] this world and turn yourselves away from it, for it vanishes quickly, quakes frequently and transfers soon.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

195. Neediness has been decreed for those from among the people of this world who seek to increase their wealth while those who get along without it have been assisted with comfort.
196. The good of this world is [a cause of] sorrow and its evil is [a cause of] regret.
197. The good of this world is insignificant and its evil is ready at hand.
198. Take from that which will not last for you for that which will last for you and will not separate from you.
199. Take from the little of this world that which suffices you and leave from its abundance that which makes you transgress.
200. Take from this world that which comes to you and turn away from that which turns away from you, but if you don't do this then [at least] be moderate in what you seek.
201. Mingling with those who are attached to this world is the primary cause of affliction and corruption of piety.
202. Mingling with those who are attached to this world tarnishes religion and weakens certitude.
203. The significance of this world is little, its product is inferior, its delight is false and its bounties are illusory.
204. The aspiration and pursuit of one whose hope and desire is [acquiring felicity in] this world, is frustrated.
205. It is an abode which is fraught with tribulations and known for its treachery. Its circumstances do not last and its dwellers are not safe.
206. It is an abode which is lowly before its Lord, so its lawful has been mixed with its forbidden, its good with its evil and its sweetness with its bitterness.
207. It is the abode of transience, the resting place of the sinners, the residence of the wretched and the transgressors (or the repulsed and those who exceed the limits).
208. Allah, the Glorified, called you to the Eternal Abode and the permanent residence, and great blessings and proximity to the Prophets and the felicitous, but you sinned and turned away; whereas this world called you to an abode of wretchedness and the place of annihilation and different types of tribulations and hardships, but you obeyed it and quickly rushed [towards it].
209. Recalling [the pleasures of] this world is the worst of all maladies.
210. The humiliation of this world is the glory of the Hereafter.
211. Leave that which is little for that which is abundant and that which is limited for that which is vast.
212. The cornerstone of calamities is infatuation with this world.
213. Many an adviser from this world may be suspected by you.
214. Many a person who is truthful about this world is considered a liar by you.
215. Many a thing which one should be cautious of in this world is not taken into consideration by you.
216. You desire for the unachievable is [a sign of] ignorance.
217. Your being content with this world is from your bad choices and your wretched endeavours.
218. Increase in [one's desire for] this world corrupts the Hereafter.
219. The ornaments of this world corrupt weak minds.
220. The cause of wretchedness is love of this world.
221. The cause of corruption of the mind is love of this world.
222. The sovereignty of this world is disgrace and its loftiness is lowness.
223. The joy of this world is deception and its enjoyment is destruction.
224. One's seeking tranquillity in [the delights of] this world is from the greatest deceptions.
225. The worst of tribulations is love of this world.
226. The worst of afflictions is love for this world.
227. The health of this world is [fraught with] sicknesses and its pleasures are [fraught with] pains.
228. Adultery has become the key to lineage in the world (or among the people), chastity is rare and Islam is worn the wrong way up like fur.
229. Divorcing this world is the dowry for Paradise.
230. Seeking this world is the primary cause of tribulation.
231. The one who seeks this world through religion is chastised and condemned.
232. Seeking to join this world with the Hereafter is from the deceptions of the self.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

233. The seeker of this world misses [the opportunity to work for] the Hereafter and death comes to him unexpectedly, and he does not get from this world except what has been apportioned for him.
234. He who turns away from the embellishments of this world gains the joy of the glad tidings [of Paradise].
235. I am amazed at the one who builds his transient abode and abandons his Eternal Abode.
236. The servant of this world faces continuous afflictions and calamities.
237. The end of this world is annihilation.
238. The deception of this world strikes [a person] down.
239. World, deceive the one who is ignorant of your tricks and for whom your traps of deceit are concealed.
240. He ('a) said about this world: It is deceitful - that which is in it is illusory; it is perishing all that is upon it perishes.
241. It is deceitful, harmful, volatile, evanescent, transient and perishing.
242. The foods of this world are poisons and its means are worn-out [and weak] ropes.
243. In being averse to this world there is attainment of prosperity.
244. In the vicissitudes of this world there are lessons to be learnt.
245. In this world there is action without reckoning.
246. This world is what the wretched desire.
247. The two that are attached to each other may get detached and the two groups that are united may get separated.
248. Indeed, that which was sweet of this world has become bitter, and that which was clean of it has become dirty.
249. Indeed this world has embellished itself with its deception and it deceives [its inhabitants] with its embellishments.
250. Little of this world takes away a lot of the Hereafter.
251. The little of this world does not last and its abundance is not safe from calamities.
252. The mainstay of this world is by four [groups]: A scholar who acts on his knowledge, an ignorant person who is not too proud to learn, a wealthy person who is generous with his wealth to the needy and a poor person who does not sell his Hereafter for his worldly life. So when the scholar does not act on his knowledge, the ignorant one refuses to learn; and when the wealthy is miserly with his wealth, the poor one sells his Hereafter for his world.
253. Every gathering is [headed] towards dispersion.
254. Every profit of this world is a loss.
255. Everything that passes [away] is as if it never was.
256. Every ease of this world is difficulty.
257. Every provision of this world is trivial for the contented and the chaste.
258. Everything in this world [is such that it] seems greater when heard than when seen.
259. All the circumstances of this world change abruptly and its ownership is taken away and transferred [to others].
260. Every moment of this world is [taking it] towards the end and every living thing in it is [moving] towards its death and annihilation.
261. How many a person who relied upon this world has been made to suffer by it!
262. How many a person who had confidence in this world has been struck down by it!
263. How many a person who possesses grandeur has this world abased!
264. How many a person who possesses high standing has this world returned to humility!
265. That which has passed from this world suffices as an informer of what remains of this world.
266. The abundance of this world is paucity, its grandeur is humiliation, its embellishments are misguiding and its gifts are a trial.
267. Be in this world with your body and in the Hereafter with your heart and your actions.
268. Be most cautious of this world when you are most at ease with it.
269. Become uninterested in this world and be infatuated with the Hereafter.
270. Be among those who recognize the transience of this world so they renounce it and know about the eternity of the Hereafter so they work for it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

271. Be a community that understands that this world is not their [permanent] abode so they exchange it [for the Hereafter].
272. Be from the children of the Hereafter and do not be from the children of this world, for every child will cling to his mother on the Day of Resurrection.
273. Whenever a person becomes more preoccupied and infatuated with this world, it makes him enter paths [of danger] and fall into places of destruction.
274. Whatever does not benefit, harms, and this world with its sweetness, becomes bitter whereas poverty with [seeking] sufficiency through Allah, never harms.
275. Every time something of this world slips away from you, it is an advantage [and a blessing].
276. Just as the sun and the night do not come together, similarly love for Allah and love for this world do not come together.
277. He who claims [to have] certitude in the eternal while he is still attached to the transient, has lied.
278. For every abundance [in this world] there is paucity.
279. For everything in this world there is expiry and annihilation.
280. For the one who finds delight in the pleasures of this world there is distress [and regret in the Hereafter].
281. Indeed, this world has unveiled the cloak [of its disloyalty] and notified you all equally.
282. Verily this world of yours is more lowly in my view than the [dry] bone of a pig in the hand of a leper.
283. It is not a [good] trade to consider this world to be a price for your soul and a substitute to that which is for you with Allah.
284. For love of this world, listeners turn a deaf ear to [words of] wisdom and hearts become blind to the light of insight.
285. Nobody gains any joy from this world but that it is followed by tears [of sorrow].
286. Allah, the Glorified, has not cleansed this world for His friends nor has He withheld it from His enemies.
287. Nobody gets the comforts of this world internally but that he has to face its hardships externally.
288. One whose effort was for this world did not earn any recompense [for it] nor did he fulfil any obligation.
289. No person in this world is covered by the light rain of ease but that the heavy rain of distress pours upon him.
290. If the people of the world understood [the truth about it], this world would surely be ruined.
291. If this world was praiseworthy in front of Allah, He would have reserved it for His friends, but He turned their hearts away from it and expunged its desires from them.
292. If this world was to remain with one of you, it would not have reached the one in whose hands it is [now].
293. One who strives for this world is eluded by it.
294. One who holds back from this world is sought by it.
295. One who wrestles this world is knocked down by it.
296. One who disobeys this world is obeyed by it.
297. One who turns away from this world is approached by it.
298. One who knows [the reality of] this world, renounces it.
299. One who thinks little of this world, it comes to him humiliated.
300. One who is owned by this world falls down often.
301. One who is delighted by the embellishments of this world is owned by [its] deceptions.
302. One who buys his Hereafter with his world, gains both of them.
303. One who sells his Hereafter for his world loses both of them.
304. One who seeks less of this world gains more of that which keeps him secure [in the Hereafter].
305. One who seeks more of this world gains more of that which will ruin him.
306. One who builds his world destroys his place of return [in the Hereafter].
307. One who is deceived by this world is deceived by [his] aspirations.
308. One who is pleased with this world is eluded by the Hereafter.
309. One who is greedy for this world is destroyed.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

310. One who is not content with the little [he has] of this world will not be satisfied with the much that he accumulates from it.
311. Who is more at a disadvantage than the one who sells the eternal [Hereafter] for the transient [world]?
312. Who is more at a loss than the one who exchanges the Hereafter for this world?
313. One who seeks from this world that which pleases him, his crime (and sinfulness) increases and his transgression prolongs.
314. One who relies on the deceptions of this world considers himself safe from its perils.
315. Whoever keeps back from seeking this world, it rises towards him.
316. One who exceeds the limits in seeking this world dies a pauper.
317. Whoever turns away from this world, it comes to him belittled.
318. One whose heart is attached to the love of this world catches three things from it: worry that never leaves him, greed that never abandons him and hopes that are never realized by him.
319. Whoever is attracted by the dazzle of this world, it blinds both his eyes.
320. One who desires the adornments of this world is eluded by the sought after eternal bliss [of the Hereafter].
321. One who has been overcome by this world is blind to that which is in front of him.
322. One who builds his world corrupts his religion and ruins his Hereafter.
323. One who loves [to acquire] the prestige of [both] this world and the Hereafter must detest prestige in this world.
324. One who humbles himself for the children of this world takes off the garment of piety.
325. One who fixes his gaze on the children of this world is blinded from the path of guidance.
326. One who seeks something from this world is eluded by something greater from the Hereafter than what he seeks [from this world].
327. Whoever seeks [the profits of] this world through the work of the Hereafter, it takes him further away from that which he seeks.
328. One who is glad to relinquish the bounties of this world [for the sake of the Hereafter] has certainly perfected his intellect.
329. Whoever gains possession of something of this world loses much more of the Hereafter than what he possesses [of this world].
330. One who knows [the reality of] this world is not saddened by that which befalls him [in it].
331. One who recognizes the deceptions of this world will not be deceived by its impossible dreams.
332. One who triumphs in this world becomes troubled and one whom it eludes gets distressed.
333. One in whose eyes this world is grand and in whose heart its position is great, prefers it over Allah and devotes himself to it and becomes a slave to it.
334. One who becomes infatuated with this world, it fills his heart with a sadness which keeps alternating in the black part of his heart, a distress that worries him and a grief that causes him pain, until its suffocation [of death] overtakes him and he is flung in the open while both the arteries of his heart are severed. It is easy for Allah to cause him to die and he becomes too far for his comrades to meet him (or to remain with him).
335. One who relies on this world is indeed wretched and deprived.
336. Whoever serves this world, it exploits him and whoever serves Allah, the Glorified, it (this world) serves him.
337. One whose concern [and effort] is for this world, his wretchedness and misery will be prolonged on the Day of Resurrection.
338. One who does not think about the bounties of his world becomes powerful.
339. One of the troubles of this world is the spoiling of union by separation and happiness by distress.
340. It is from the lowliness of this world in front Allah is that He is not disobeyed anywhere except in it.
341. From the [signs of the] contemptibleness of this world in the sight of Allah is that one does not gain that which is with Him except by abandoning it.
342. Nothing corrupts the faith like this world.
343. How will the offshoot remain after the root has gone?

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

344. This world of yours which endears itself to you is not better than the Hereafter which is made to appear ugly by your negative perception [of it].
345. That which you send forth from this world is for your own benefit and that which you leave behind from it is for your enemy.
346. That which [one] increases in this world, [he] diminishes in the Hereafter.
347. That which [one] diminishes in this world, [he] increases in the Hereafter.
348. Do not be overjoyed by that which you obtain in this world and do not despair with sadness for that which eludes you from it.
349. What is good in a house that falls down like demolished construction and in a lifetime that expires as [its] provisions get exhausted?
350. What is the matter with you? You are delighted with the little of this world that you obtain while you are not saddened by the abundance of the Hereafter that you are deprived of?!
351. This world has not deceived you, rather through it you have been deceived.
352. The transient world has not beguiled you, rather through it you have been beguiled.
353. What is [the matter] with you that which, if you acquire it [the wealth of this world], its improvement [and seeking something better than it] preoccupies you from enjoying it, and if you enjoy it, it spoils it [the enjoyment] for you with the victory of death over you.
354. The deceived person who gains success in this world through its smallest portion is not like the other person who is gains success in the Hereafter by exerting his greatest effort.
355. How close this world is to departure, old age is to youth, and doubt is to uncertainty!
356. The bitterness of this world is the sweetness of the Hereafter.
357. One who accompanies this world is a target of calamities and mishaps.
358. The similitude of this world is like your shadow, if you stop it stops and if you seek it, it moves further away.
359. The similitude of this world is like the snake, its feel is soft but it has deadly venom in its fangs. The inexperienced and ignorant one reaches towards it while the wise and intelligent one is cautious of it.
360. The wares of this world are [like] broken orts that cause epidemics, therefore keep off the grazing land which is more beneficial to migrate from than to peacefully stay in, and that of it which suffices for subsistence in it is purer [for the soul] than its riches.
361. Destroyed is one who finds reassurance in this world and makes his religion its dower, so he turns towards it wherever it turns, having taken it to be his [only] concern and his deity.
362. Take it easy, for indeed the matter is near, the companionship is short and the sojourn is brief.
363. It (this world) is obstructive and obdurate, deviating and swaying, deceiving and ungrateful.
364. Those who are pleased with this world are destroyed on the Day of Resurrection and those who are disheartened by it are saved.
365. Do not desire anything that perishes and goes away, for this enough of a detriment.
366. Do not desire this world thereby losing your Hereafter.
367. Do not desire that which perishes, and take from the transient for the eternal.
368. Do not jostle for the bounties of this world, for indeed its bounties are trifling.
369. Do not give your religion as dower for this world, for indeed whoever gives his religion as dowry to this world, it brings to him wretchedness, pain, hardship and tribulation.
370. Do not sell the Hereafter for this world and do not exchange the eternal with the transient.
371. Do not let this world tempt you, and do not let your vain desires overpower you, and do not consider your stay in this world to be long, and do not let your hopes deceive you, for indeed hopes are not part of religion in any way.
372. Let not the greatest thing that you achieve in this world be the attainment of pleasures and the quelling of rage, rather let it be the enlivening of truth and the annihilation of falsehood.
373. Do not be tempted by good loans [and temporary pleasures], for the loans of this world are returned and you remain with that which you have accumulated of the forbidden.
374. Do not let the transient world deceive you with its false amusements, for indeed its amusement ceases while the vices which you have acquired remain with you.
375. Let not any of you pine the way a servant girl pines, for that which has departed from him of this world.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

376. Do not solicit this world by the work of the Hereafter and do not prefer the transient over the eternal, for this is the trait of the hypocrites and the character of the apostates.
377. Never be deceived by the condition of the people of vanities [and what they enjoy of this world], for indeed it is an extended shadow [which lasts] until a fixed time.
378. The deceptions of this world do not excite the learned.
379. This world does not protect the one who seeks refuge in it.
380. People do not abandon anything from their religion for the sake of this world but that Allah opens for them that which is more harmful for them.
381. The delights of this world do not continue and its joys do not last, and there is no security from its afflictions.
382. It behoves the one who recognizes this world to renounce its pleasures and to turn away from it.
383. It behoves the one who recognizes the transient abode to work for the Eternal Abode.
384. It behoves the one who knows how fleeting this world is, to renounce its pleasures.
385. It behoves a person to seek a cure from the ailments of this world just like a sick person seeks treatment, and he should avoid its lusts and pleasures just as a sick person avoids certain foods.
386. Little of this world corrupts the faith.
387. Little of this world suffices and plenty of it destroys.
388. Little of this world is better than plenty of it, and that of it which suffices for subsistence in it is better than that which destroys.
389. Slaves of desire, cut them short! For indeed, the one who leans on this world gets nothing out of it but the grating sound of hardship.
390. One who works for this world makes a loss.

Notes

1. The literal translation of lumādhah is the food that remains on one's lips after eating and is licked off by the tongue.
2. Possibly referring to the fact the interior of the earth is the place of the dead and the exterior is the place of sickness and afflictions.
3. Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Khwānsari says that it is possible that this is referring to the companions of the 12th Imam ('a) (Ref: Sharḥe Ghurar al-Hikam vol. 2 pg. 656).
4. Or: This world makes one submit.
5. Or: Indeed if you approach this world, it will turn its back towards you.
6. Or: Indeed if you turn your back on this world, it will come towards you.
7. Or: Nobody gets the comforts of this world before him but that he has to suffer its hardships afterwards.
8. In Nahj al-Balāgha the converse has been mentioned i.e. the vain person who is successful in this world by exerting his greatest effort is not like the other who is successful in the Hereafter by gaining its smallest portion. (Saying no. 380)

216. REMEDY AND AILMENT

1. Many a remedy brings about an ailment.
2. Many an ailment turns into a remedy.
3. Sometimes the remedy is [itself] an ailment.
4. Sometimes the ailment is [itself] a cure.
5. One whose ailments are many, his cure will not be known.
6. One who does not bear the bitterness of the remedy, his pain persists.
7. There is no remedy for the one who is fond of his ailment.
8. There is no cure for the one who hides his ailment from his doctor.
9. I am amazed at the one who knows the remedy of his ailment yet does not seek it, and if he finds it he does not apply it [to cure his ailment].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

10. For every living thing there is an ailment.
11. For every sickness there is a remedy.
12. Walk with your ailment as long as you can.

Notes

1. Meaning one must try to bear the ailment without using any medication for as long as he can.

217. ALTERNATION OF POWER AND SOVEREIGNTY

1. The signs of alternation of power are the creation of stratagems.
2. One of the signs of alternation of power is vigilance in safeguarding affairs.
3. The sovereignty of the honourable is one of the most beneficial gains.
4. From the indicators of alternation of power is decrease of negligence.
5. Nothing protects empires like justice.
6. The decline [and imminent fall] of empires is evinced by four things: neglecting the principles [and core values of justice and equity], clinging to vanities, promotion of the wicked and demotion of the virtuous.
7. The sovereignty of scoundrels is founded on oppression and corruption.
8. The sovereignty of the great (or honourable) people is one of the best of bounties.
9. For every empire there is a period [after which it falls].

218. FLATTERY

1. Do not flatter each other thereby letting flattery plunge you into sin.

219. DEBT

1. The worst collar is the collar of debt.
2. Too much debt makes a truthful person a liar and an honest person dishonest.
3. Debt is one of the two bondages.
4. Debt is bondage, repayment is freedom.

220. RELIGION AND SHARIA LAW

1. Religion is the more honourable of the two lineages.
2. Religion and good manners are a result of intelligence.
3. The foundation of religion is returning trusts [to their owners] and fulfilling pledges.
4. Know that the beginning of religion is submission and its end is sincere devotion.
5. Indeed the codes of religion are one and its ways are straight, so the one who follows it arrives [at the destination] and gains [success], and the one who stands away from it strays and regrets.
6. Where are the different paths taking you?
7. Where is the darkness misleading you and [how are] the falsehoods deceiving you?
8. Where are your minds straying and your souls deviating [to]? Do you seek to substitute facts for lies and exchange truth for falsehood?
9. The greatest felicity is [in] the uprightness of religion.
10. Little religion is better than plenty of worldly possession.
11. The most religious of all people is one whose religiosity is not corrupted by [lustful] desire.
12. The best religion is cutting short [false] aspirations, and the highest worship is being sincere in your action.
13. Verily Allah, the Glorified, grants this world to [both] the one whom He loves and the one whom He does not love, but He grants religion only to the one whom He loves.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

14. Verily Allah, the Most High, does not give the religion except to His chosen ones and the elite from among His creation.
15. Indeed the best religion is loving for the sake of Allah, hating for the sake of Allah, taking for the sake of Allah and giving for the sake of Allah, the Glorified.
16. Indeed the religion [of Islam] is like a tree, its roots are certitude in Allah and its fruits are befriending for the sake of Allah and having enmity for the sake of Allah, the Glorified.
17. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has illuminated the path of truth and has clarified its ways, so [there is] either inescapable wretchedness or eternal felicity.
18. Religion safeguards.
19. Religion exalts, this world humiliates.
20. Religion is [the path to] joy.
21. Religion is light, certitude is joy.
22. Religion is the greatest pursuit.
23. Religion is the strongest pillar.
24. The Sharī'ah is [for] disciplining the self.
25. The Sharī'ah is for the benefit [and reformation] of mankind.
26. Religion is a treasure and knowledge is a guide [to it].
27. Religion is a tree whose roots are submission and contentment.
28. Religion deters [one] from the unlawful.
29. Religion is not reformed except by the intellect.
30. If you make your religion follow your worldly desires, you will have destroyed your religion and your [life in this] world, and you will be among the losers in the Hereafter.
31. The fruit of religion is trustworthiness.
32. The fruit of religion is strong conviction.
33. Three things are the disgrace of religion: lewdness, treachery and betrayal [of trust].
34. Three things are the consolidators of religion: chastity, piety and modesty.
35. Three things are the perfection of religion: sincerity, certitude and contentment.
36. The steadfastness of religion is through the strength of conviction.
37. The consolidation of religion is in sincerity of action, cutting short [false] aspirations, doing good to others and refraining from ugly deeds.
38. The beauty of religion is piety.
39. The excellence of [one's adherence to] religion stems from the strength of [one's] certitude.
40. Preserving the faith is the fruit of cognizance and the peak of wisdom.
41. Safeguard the religion through [the means of] this world and do not safeguard this world through the religion.
42. The best course of religion is piety.
43. The sign of a servant's faith is his piety.
44. Defend the religious laws, protect the borders of the Muslim lands and safeguard your religion and your trust through your impartiality towards yourself and acting justly among your subjects.
45. The cornerstone of religion is acquiring good deeds.
46. The adornment of religion is intelligence.
47. The adornment of religion is patience and contentment.
48. The cause of piety is soundness of faith.
49. The uprightness of religion is through virtuous piety and certitude.
50. The safety of religion is in seclusion from the people.
51. The safety of [one's] religion and worldly life is in being amicable with the people.
52. Six things are used to test the faith of a man: the strength of his religion, the truth of his conviction, the intensity of his piety, his overcoming vain desires, the paucity of his [worldly] inclinations and his being moderate in what he seeks.
53. The pinnacle of religion is patience, certitude and struggling against vain desires.
54. There are six fundamentals of faith: sincerity of conviction, giving advice [and guidance] to [fellow] Muslims, establishing the prayer, paying the zakāt [alms-tax], performing the Hajj [pilgrimage] and renouncing the pleasures of this world.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

55. The rectitude of religion is [through] piety.
56. The rectitude of religion is through strong conviction.
57. Make religion the fortress of your state and [make] gratitude the protection of your blessings, for every state that is surrounded by religion will not be defeated and every blessing that is protected by gratitude will not be taken away.
58. Make religion the shield of your life and piety the preparation for your death.
59. A person's preservation [of himself from sin] is to the extent of his religiousness.
60. Safeguard your religion through your worldly life and you will gain both of them, and do not safeguard your worldly life through your religion thereby losing both of them.
61. Safeguard the faith through [the life of] this world and it will save you, and do not safeguard [the life of] this world through the faith otherwise it will destroy you.
62. Blessed is he who acts upon the teachings of religion and follows the footsteps of the Prophets.
63. You must cling to religion, piety and certitude, for these are the best of virtues and through them the lofty stations are attained.
64. One's religiousness is proportionate to his intellect.
65. The height of religion is faith [and conviction].
66. The height of religion is satisfaction [with the decree of Allah].
67. The height of religion is enjoining good, forbidding evil and upholding the boundaries [of Islamic law].
68. The one who lacks religion falls into disbelief and misguidance.
69. This world is the corruptor of religion.
70. The basis of religious law is enjoining good, forbidding evil and upholding the boundaries [of Islamic law].
71. Just as a body and its shadow do not separate, so too religion and success do not separate.
72. For every religion there is a character and the character of faith is kindness.
73. One who becomes religious fortifies himself.
74. One who is stingy with his religion [and does not give it up for the sake of this world] becomes exalted.
75. He who has no religion has no magnanimity.
76. One who becomes learned in religion increases [his prosperity].
77. One whose religiousness is sound, his trustworthiness is stronger.
78. One who corrupts his faith corrupts his Hereafter.
79. One who is endowed with religion is endowed with the good of this world and the Hereafter.
80. One who considers his religion to be precious, [the hardship of] this world becomes easy for him [to bear].
81. One whose faith is strong is certain about the reward [he will get for his good actions] and is satisfied with whatever has been decreed [for him by Allah].
82. One who has no religion has no salvation.
83. One whose observance of religion is thorough, his position in the Hereafter will be exalted.
84. One who is careless in his religion becomes lowly and one who fights with the truth, is forced to yield [to it].
85. Whoever takes the religion of Allah as idle sport and play, Allah, the Glorified, will put him into the fire for eternity.
86. One who is cautious [and concerned] about this religion is safe from destruction.
87. Nothing undermines religion like abandoning the upholding of Allah's religion and neglecting the obligatory [actions].
88. The basis of religion is piety.
89. The basis of religion is opposing vain desires.
90. What a good companion religion is!
91. Keep your religions unsullied by uncertainties and safeguard yourselves from situations of destructive doubts.
92. The structure of religion is [based on] opposing vain desires and keeping away from [the unlawful pleasures of] this world.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

93. The structure of religion is [based on] two qualities: your impartiality towards yourself and supporting your brethren.
94. Guided is the one who puts on the garment of religion.
95. In describing the religion of Islam [he ('a) said]: It is the brightest of all paths, the clearest [and most illuminated] of all passages; it is an elevated land, [with] a lofty peak.
96. Guard your religion by seeking help from Allah.
97. Do not be neglectful of your religion and eager for your world by seeking more of that which will not last for you and less of that which will last for you, for this will lead you to severe chastisement [in the Hereafter].
98. Religion does not remain safe with avarice.
99. Religion does not surrender the one who takes refuge in it.
100. The religiousness of a man is deduced by the virtue of his God-wariness and the truth of his piety.

221. THE SAVINGS

1. The best savings are good actions.
2. The best of (all) savings are good actions.
3. The best of (all) savings is knowledge that is acted upon and good that is not followed by obligation

Notes

1. The literal meaning of this word is: a thing that is stored or repositied for a time of need.

222. REMEMBRANCE [OF ALLAH] AND THE REMINDER

1. Remembering [Allah] is the better of the two gains.
2. Remembering [Allah] comforts the soul, illuminates the heart and brings down the mercy [of Allah].
3. Remembering [Allah] is the light of intellect, the life of the souls and the polishing of the hearts.
4. Sitting in the masjid from after dawn up to sunrise in order to remember [and praise] Allah, the Glorified, is quicker in making sustenance [more easily] obtainable than travelling to different parts of the land [in order to earn one's livelihood].
5. A beautiful remembrance is one of the two lives.
6. A beautiful remembrance is one of the two lifetimes.
7. Remembering [Allah] is not from rituals of the tongue nor is it from the passing of thoughts rather it is first from the remembered and then from the rememberer.
8. Fill your solitude with the remembrance [of Allah] and accompany blessings with gratitude.
9. Be abundant in your remembrance of Allah, for it is the best remembrance.
10. Be constant in your remembrance [of Allah] for it illuminates the heart and is surely the best [form of] worship.
11. The most deserving to be remembered by you is the one who does not forget you.
12. Remember the disperser of gatherings, the dasher of hopes, the bringer of death[s] and the announcer of disunion and separation.
13. The basis of reformation of the heart is occupying it with the remembrance of Allah.
14. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has made [His] remembrance a polishing for the hearts, to see with after blindness and listen with after deafness and to become submissive with it after obduracy.
15. Verily there are those who hold on to the remembrance of Allah and have taken it in lieu of this world and thus neither trade nor business has preoccupied them from [His] remembrance. They spend the days of their lives with it and shout it in the ears of the negligent [in order to remind them].
16. Remembrance is being in the company of the beloved.
17. Remembering [Allah] is the key to intimacy [and nearness with Him].
18. The remembrance [of Allah] is a light and guidance.
19. The remembrance [of Allah] is the delight of the lovers.
20. Remembrance of Allah brings comfort [and delight].
21. Remembrance of Allah is the polishing of visions and illumination of the inner selves.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

22. Remembrance [of Allah] is the guidance of the intellects and the enlightenment of the souls.
23. When you see that Allah is making you comfortable with His remembrance, then [know that] He loves you.
24. When you see that Allah is making you comfortable with His creation and isolating you from His remembrance, then (know that) He dislikes you.
25. It is through the remembrance of Allah that mercy descends.
26. Through the constant remembrance of Allah, heedlessness is dispelled.
27. The fruit of remembrance [of Allah] is illumination of the hearts.
28. The best means by which you achieve success in [all] matters is the remembrance of Allah, the Glorified.
29. Constant remembrance [of Allah] illuminates the heart and mind.
30. Remembrance of Allah is the light of faith.
31. Remembrance of Allah is a means of driving away Satan.
32. Remembrance of Allah is the practice of the Near Ones.
33. Remembrance of Allah is the polishing of the breasts and the tranquillity of the hearts.
34. The remembrance of Allah is nourishment for the souls and [being in] the company of the [most] Beloved.
35. Remembrance of Allah illuminates the visions and comforts the consciences.
36. The remembrance of Allah is what makes matters successful and inner selves illuminated.
37. Remembrance of Allah is the cure for the maladies of the souls.
38. The remembrance of Allah is a dispeller of hardships (or maladies) and misery.
39. Remembrance of Allah is the [principal] asset of every believer and its profit is safety against Satan.
40. The remembrance of Allah is the pillar of faith and a protection against Satan.
41. Remembering Allah [at all times] is the trait of every good-doer and the quality of every believer.
42. Remembrance of Allah is the joy of every God-wary person and the delight of every possessor of certitude.
43. The one who listens to the [remembrance and] glorification of Allah is [himself] a glorifier.
44. You must espouse the remembrance of Allah for it is surely the light of the heart.
45. In the remembrance of Allah there is life for the hearts.
46. Whoever remembers Allah, He remembers him.
47. One who remembers Allah is gains insight.
48. Whoever is preoccupied in remembering the people, Allah, the Glorified, cuts him off from His remembrance.
49. Whoever is preoccupied in the remembrance of Allah, Allah makes his remembrance good.
50. Whoever fills his heart with the constant remembrance of Allah, his actions become good [both] in secret and in the open.
51. Whoever remembers Allah, the Glorified, Allah enlivens his heart and illuminates his intellect and his mind.
52. One whose remembrance [of Allah] increases, his mind becomes illuminated.
53. Constant remembrance [of Allah] is the quality of the friends [of Allah].
54. The constant remembrance [of Allah] is nourishment for the souls and the key to righteousness.
55. Do not remember Allah, the Glorified, in a state of inattentiveness, and do not forget Him by being distracted [with the amusements of this world], and remember Him perfectly such that your heart is in agreement with your tongue and your inward is in accordance with your outward; and you will never remember Him with the befitting remembrance until you forget your ego in your remembrance and lose it in your affair [because all your attention is towards Allah].
56. There is no guidance like remembrance [and glorification of Allah].
57. The one who remembers Allah is in His Company.
58. The one who remembers Allah is His intimate friend.
59. The one who remembers Allah is from the successful ones.
60. One who reminds you [of Allah and the Hereafter] is has surely warned you [against evil].

Notes

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Meaning one who is fondly remembered after his death is like one who is still alive.

223. VICES AND THOSE WHO COMMIT THEM

1. Vices are a disease, and its remedy is seeking forgiveness, and its cure is not repeating [the vices].
2. Taking a sin lightly is worse than committing the sin.
3. Giving up sin is difficult, but giving up Paradise is [going to be] more difficult.
4. Things come to us that seem to be much when we amass them but which we consider to be less when we divide them.
5. Be careful of the sins that lead you to deep trouble the vices that bring the wrath of Allah.
6. Refrain from desecration of the sacred, for indeed this is the practice of the wicked and the people of depravity and vice.
7. Refrain from persistence [in committing vices] for it is surely the gravest of great sins and the worst of offences.
8. Refrain from exposing [your] sins, for this is one of the worst of offences.
9. Refrain from vices, for the one who sells the eternal Paradise for a vile sin from the sins of this world is indeed wretched.
10. Do not take the committing of vices lightly, for verily it will cover you with humiliation in this world and earn you the wrath of Allah in the Hereafter.
11. Verily wrongdoings are [like] wild horses that carry their riders on their backs while their bridles have been thrown off, so they take them [straight] into the fire of hell.
12. The greatest misdeed is recommending the vicious.
13. The worst misdeed is refusing to accept an excuse [that is valid].
14. The worst of sins in the sight of Allah is the sin upon which its doer persists.
15. The gravest of sins in the sight of Allah, the Glorified, is the sin which is taken lightly by the one who commits it.
16. The vice that brings the quickest retribution is oppressing the one who does not oppress you.
17. The vilest of sins is cutting off ties with near relatives and impiety [with one's parents].
18. The gravest of sins is the sin upon which the sinner persists.
19. Verily the vice with the worst of consequences is error [and misguidance].
20. Verily Allah, the Glorified, hates the one who is insolent and bold in committing sins.
21. Indeed one who disobeys Allah is the enemy of Muhammad (s), even if he is the nearest of his relatives.
22. Verily the clemency shown by Allah, the Most High, despite [your] acts of disobedience has made you bold and has driven you to [do things that will] destroy yourself.
23. Persistence [in sinning] is the practice of the depraved.
24. Persistence [in sinning] leads one to hellfire.
25. The one who openly declares his sin is an advertiser [of his disobedience to Allah].
26. Disobedience [to Allah] is the negligence of the vicious (or the weak).
27. Sin prevents the one's supplication from being answered.
28. Persistence [in sinning] is the worst of ideas.
29. Persistence [in sinning] is the gravest of sins.
30. Persistence [in sinning] is the trait of the doomed.
31. Retribution is the fruit of misdeeds.
32. Persistence [in sinning] brings [divine] wrath.
33. Disobedience [to Allah] brings retribution.
34. Returning to sin [and repeating it] is persistence [in sinning].
35. Persistence [in sinning] is the gravest sin and the quickest in [bringing] retribution.
36. Keeping away from vices is more important [and better] than earning good deeds.
37. If you must, by all means, be pure, then purify yourselves from vices of the hearts.
38. If you must, by all means, be clean, then clean yourselves from the filth of flaws and vices.
39. If you purify yourselves from vices, Allah will love you.
40. Verily if you keep away from vices you will attain elevated ranks.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

41. The bane of obedience is insubordination.
42. When you commit a sin then be remorseful for it.
43. It is through disobedience [to Allah] that wretchedness comes about.
44. Through disobedience [to Allah] the [gate of] hellfire is closed for the aberrant [and they are unable to escape it].
45. How evil an action disobedience [to Allah] is!
46. Avoid disobeying Allah and you will be successful.
47. Guard yourself against sins and restrain yourselves from them, for indeed, wretched is the one who gives them free rein.
48. Exalted is Allah, the Mighty, [yet] how lenient is He! And you are lowly and weak yet how bold you are in your disobedience to Him!
49. The sweetness of sin is spoilt by the pain of retribution.
50. The outcome of sins is loss [and destruction].
51. Many a great sin of yours is deemed by you as [being] small.
52. The one who embarks upon sin, his [final] abode is hellfire.
53. Submission to sin is the trait of the doomed.
54. I am amazed at the person who knows the severity of Allah's retribution and [yet] he still continues being persistent [in sinning].
55. The companion of vices is the hostage of [his] misdeeds.
56. For every evil act there is punishment.
57. For the one who is bold in [committing] sins there are retributions from the chastisement of Allah, the Glorified.
58. If Allah, the Glorified, had not forbidden that which He has ordained as unlawful, it would have [still] been mandatory for the intelligent one to keep away from it.
59. Rejoicing in vices is uglier than committing them.
60. Is there any place of protection or shelter, or any sanctuary or asylum, or any place to flee or return back to?
61. Do not persist in that which is followed by sin.
62. Do not tear your veils [of innocence] in front of the One who knows your secrets.
63. Do not undertake acts of disobedience to Allah, the Glorified, and act with obedience to Him, as this will be a provision for you [in the Hereafter].
64. Never belittle the small sins, for they are indeed dangerous [and destructive]; and one who is surrounded by his belittled [sins] is destroyed by them.
65. Those who remain behind [in this world after others have passed away before them] do not stop from committing sins.
66. There is no vice greater than persistence [in sinning].
67. There is no vice greater than rejoicing in acts of depravity.
68. One who is persistent in his sin shows audacity in front of the wrath of his Lord.
69. Whoever takes pleasure in the disobedience of Allah is made to suffer utter humiliation by Allah.
70. One whose sins increase, his disparagement becomes necessary.
71. Neither are blessings taken away from you nor are you deprived of any comforts of life but because of the sins that you commit, and Allah is not unjust to the Servants.
72. None of the acts of disobedience to Allah, the Glorified, come about except in [the garb of] desire.
73. Constant sinning cuts [one's] sustenance.
74. Openly [and boldly] sinning in front of Allah [without any shame] hastens [divine] retributions.
75. We seek refuge with Allah from the evils of the intellect (or from evil actions) and the ugliness of errors, and from Him do we seek assistance [against all this].
76. Far be it! You have not feigned ignorance except because of what has passed before you of mistakes and sins.
77. Every disobedient one is a sinner.
78. Whoever disobeys Allah, his status gets lowered.
79. Woe be to the sinner, how ignorant he is and how much of his share he has relinquished!
80. Woe to the one who is afflicted with disobedience, deprivation and abandonment.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

81. Rushing into vices causes [one to face] the chastisement of hellfire.
82. When committing sins, recall how the pleasures will [soon] end and the consequences that follow will remain.
83. Be wary of the sins done in seclusion, for indeed the Witness (to it) is the Judge.
84. Caution, caution O listener! Strive, strive O intelligent one! None can inform you like the One who is all-aware.
85. I am amazed at the one who avoids the food that could harm him, how does he not avoid the sin that would bring painful chastisement?!
86. Vice is the endeavour of the filthy.
87. How bad a leash is the leash of vices!
88. In every evil act there is retribution.
89. The one who sins knowingly does not deserve pardon.
90. Denial [of sin] is persistence [in it].
91. The one who sins without knowing is free from sin.
92. The weapon of the sinner is repentance.
93. A sinner who confesses his sin is better than the obedient one who is proud of his action.
94. Do not dishearten a sinner, for how many a person who is occupied with his sin ends up being forgiven, and how many a person has embarked on a virtuous action which he corrupts at the end of his life and winds up in the fire of hell.

224. DIVULGENCE [OF SECRETS]

1. Divulgence [of secrets] is [and act of] disloyalty
2. Divulgence [of secrets] is the practice of the others [and not of the believers].

225. THE COMPASSIONATE

1. What an excellent person the compassionate one is!

226. OPINIONS AND THE OPINONATED

1. Restrict your opinion to that which is necessary and you will be safe; avoid entering into that which does not concern you and you will be honoured.
2. Churn the opinion [like] the churning of a water-skin, and the outcome will be the most pertinent of opinions.
3. The closest of opinions to reason will be the furthest of them from vain desire.
4. The ones who possess most pertinent opinions are those who have experience.
5. The person with the best opinion is he who does not consider himself needless of the counsel of an advisor.
6. The best opinion is one which neither causes opportunities to be wasted nor brings about distress.
7. Indeed your opinion cannot encompass everything, so leave it for the important [issues].
8. The [right] opinion is [acquired] by protecting secrets.
9. Through correct opinion (or prudence), ones judiciousness is strengthened.
10. The best of opinions is the furthest of them from vain desire and the closest of them to pertinence.
11. Hidden opinions are revealed through consultation.
12. The opinion of an elderly person is more beloved to me than the fortitude [and bravery] of a youth.
13. A person's opinion is the gauge of his intelligence.
14. The opinion of an intelligent person saves.
15. The opinion of an ignorant person destroys.
16. The opinion of a person is in accordance with his experience.
17. Erroneous opinion annihilates the kingdom and heralds destruction.
18. The most evil of opinions is that which goes against the laws of Islam.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. The validity of an opinion is [measured] by the sincerity of the adviser.
20. Correct opinion saves [one] from errors.
21. Correct opinion [and decision] comes with [the coming of] power and it vanishes with its disappearance.
22. Correct opinion is [derived] through careful consideration.
23. Misguided opinion corrupts the goals.
24. Determination [and resolve] is proportionate to the strength of one's opinion.
25. Indeed the lone opinion [without any consultation] may be erroneous.
26. Indeed one who thinks his opinion is sufficient [and does not seek advice] has taken a [huge] risk.
27. One who is ignorant of the different opinions is incapacitated by ruses [and is unable to decide on the correct course].
28. One who fails to apply the [correct] opinion becomes disconcerted.
29. One who acts on the [correct] opinion, benefits [from it].
30. One whose opinions are weak, his enemies become stronger.
31. One who is impressed by his [own] opinions is defeated by his enemies.
32. One who admires his [own] opinion is overwhelmed (or destroyed) by incompetence.
33. Do not become opinionated [and headstrong], for the one who is opinionated is destroyed.
34. Do not use opinion [and conjecture] in that which is neither perceived by sight nor penetrated by thought.
35. One who is not obeyed has no opinion.
36. One who is content with his [own] opinion is indeed doomed.
37. When one is opinionated, it becomes easy for his enemies to defeat him.
38. One who takes the different opinions into consideration recognizes the points of error.
39. One who is opinionated has endangered and imperilled [himself].
40. The opinionated one falls into error and blunder.
41. Indeed the opinionated one has made an error [by not considering the other opinions].
42. One who is opinionated [and headstrong] slips.
43. Being opinionated will make you slip and will cause you to fall into an abyss.
44. How bad a disposition opinionatedness [and arbitrariness] is!

Notes

1. Literally translated as: one who stubbornly holds on to his own opinion without considering the opinions of others.

227. SHOWING OFF

1. The outside of the one who shows off is beautiful but his inside is sickly.
2. Work without seeking to show off or for the sake of renown, for indeed the one who works for other than Allah is left by Allah to the one whom he worked for.
3. Showing off is [a form of] ascribing partners [to Allah].
4. The bane of worship is showing off.
5. The smallest amount of showing off is polytheism.
6. The words of the one who shows off are beautiful, but in his heart there is an internal disease.

228. PROFIT AND GAIN

1. Many a profit turns back into loss.
2. The gainer is one who has sold this world for the Hereafter and has exchanged the transient for the eternal.

229. HOPE IN [THE MERCY OF] ALLAH AND [IN] OTHERS

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Keep all your hope for Allah, the Glorified, and do not have hope [in] anyone other than Him, for indeed no one has hoped in other than Allah, the Exalted, but that he has been disappointed.
2. The greatest affliction is the severance of hope.
3. Hope in the mercy of Allah brings more success.
4. Verily, if you have hope in Allah you will attain your hopes, but if you have hope in other than Allah then your hopes and aspirations will be frustrated.
5. Many a hope leads to deprivation.
6. Many a frustrated hope is brought about by a false aspiration.
7. Be closer to that which you do not hope for than [you are to] that which you hope for.
8. For every absence, there is a return.
9. At times the distant may come close and the close may become distant.
10. When one has hope in you, [then] do not disappoint his hope.
11. When one is not known to have a generous nature, [then] do not have hope in him.
12. Who would have hope in your kindness when you have cut off ties with your near relatives?!
13. Whoever makes Allah, the Glorified, the refuge of his hopes, He will suffice him in his religious and worldly affairs.
14. When one takes himself to be lowly, [then] do not expect [or hope] for any good from him.
15. One who does no evil to others, [then] expect good from him.
16. Do not have hope [or expectation] except from your Lord.
17. Do not hope in that which will cause you to receive rebuke for your hope.
18. Do not risk anything with the hope of getting more than it.
19. Never have hope in the favour of one who makes you feel obliged, and do not rely upon the fool and the traitor.
20. Aba Dharr! Indeed you got angry for the sake of Allah so have hope in the One whom you got angry for. Indeed the people feared you in the matter of their world while you feared them for your faith. Then leave to them that for which they are afraid of you and get away from them with that which you feared them for. How needy they are for that which you dissuade them from and how needless you are of that which they deny you. Even if the skies and the earth were closed to an individual and [then] he feared Allah, Allah would most certainly open a way for him in them. So let nothing give you comfort but the truth and let nothing distress you except falsehood. If you would have accepted their world [and its attractions] they would have loved you, and if you had shared in it they would have given you asylum.

230. MERCY AND COMPASSION

1. By showing compassion, [divine] mercy descends.
2. Being compassionate to the weak brings down [divine] mercy.
3. Showing compassion to one who does not show compassion [to others] prevents [divine] mercy, and sparing one who does not spare others destroys the nation.
4. I am amazed at the one who hopes for the mercy of one who is above him, how can he not show compassion to the one who is below him?!
5. Make your heart feel compassion for all people and [show] kindness towards them, [and] do not oppress them or terrorize them.
6. The most deserving of [showing] mercy among the people is the one who is most in need of it [himself].
7. The best thing that draws forth mercy is having compassion for all people [in your heart].
8. When you are incapable of helping the weak [and needy] then let your compassion encompass them.
9. Just as you show mercy, mercy will be shown to you.
10. One who shows no mercy will be shown no mercy.
11. One who shows no mercy to the people, Allah will withhold His mercy from him.
12. One in whose heart there exists no mercy, meets less of it (mercy) when he needs it.
13. One who shows mercy is shown mercy.
14. It is by the honourable that mercy is shown.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

15. One of the surest means of intelligence is showing mercy to the ignorant.

231. NEAR RELATIVES AND KEEPING OR CUTTING OFF TIES WITH THEM

1. By keeping ties with near relatives, blessings flow forth [abundantly].
2. By cutting off ties with near relatives, [divine] retributions are brought down.
3. The kindness of a person towards his near relatives is a [form of] charity.
4. The protection of blessings is in keeping ties with near relatives.
5. The descending of [divine] retributions is in cutting off ties with near relatives.
6. Many a near relative is farther away than one who is distant [or unrelated].
7. Many ties are better to cut off than to keep.
8. Sometimes [certain] ties may result in heavy burdens [and obligations].
9. Keeping ties with near relatives makes blessings flow forth and repels calamities.
10. Keeping ties with near relatives is one of the best practices.
11. Keeping ties with near relatives makes the numbers grow and multiplies the blessings.
12. Keeping ties with near relatives hurts the enemy and protects one from falling into evil places of destruction.
13. Keeping ties with near relatives produces wealth and delays death.
14. Keeping ties with near relatives brings about love and restrains the enemy.
15. Keeping ties with near relatives increases [one's] lifespan and makes wealth grow [and multiply].
16. Keeping ties with near relatives is a means of increasing wealth and a raiser of [good] deeds.
17. Keeping ties with near relatives is from the best practices of the honourable ones.
18. Keeping ties with near relatives makes blessings flourish and repels [divine] retributions.
19. Keeping ties with near relatives makes the numbers grow and results in eminence.
20. One who is neglected by the near one is [made dear to and] supported by the distant [unrelated] one.
21. One who wrongs his near relative has indeed disgraced his honour.
22. Part of honour is keeping ties with near relatives.
23. In keeping ties with near relatives there is the safeguarding of blessings.
24. In cutting off ties with near relatives there is the coming down of [divine] retributions.
25. Keeping ties with near relatives is a means of growing the numbers.
26. Cutting off ties with near relatives brings [divine] retributions.
27. Cutting off ties with near relatives is one of the ugliest practices.
28. Cutting off ties with near relatives causes the cessation of blessings.
29. There is no increase [in wealth] with cutting off ties with near relatives.
30. No one is considered close by the one who cuts off ties with his near relatives.
31. It is not part of honour to cut off ties with near relatives.
32. Honour your family, for indeed they are your wings by which you fly, and your origin to which you return, and your hand by which you attack [the enemy].
33. Honour your near relatives, revere the forbearing from among them, be patient with the foolish among them and lighten the burden for the poor among them, for verily they are the best means of support [and assistance] in times of difficulty and ease.
34. The best practice is keeping ties with near relatives.
35. Indeed when near relatives are in contact, they become kind to each other.
36. Verily keeping ties with near relatives is from the obligatory acts of Islam, and Allah, the Glorified, has commanded that they should be honoured, and He, the Most High, keeps ties with the one who keeps ties with them and cuts off ties with the one who cuts off ties with them and honours the one who honours them.
37. Making false accusations is the first step in cutting off ties.
38. Beware! None of you should ever abandon [any of] his near relatives whom he finds in [a state of] poverty and [neither should he] desist in helping them with that which will not increase if he withholds it nor will it decrease if he spends it.
39. False accusation is the messenger of severance of ties.
40. He who cuts off ties [with near relatives] does not believe in Allah.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

41. How ugly is cutting off ties after establishing them, and alienation after brotherhood, and enmity after goodwill, and the disappearance of affinity after it had been strengthened.
42. Who will ever trust you when you are disloyal to your near relatives?
43. Many a distant one is closer than every near one.

232. EASE

1. When the circle of affliction tightens, ease follows.
2. The excellence of gratitude is in times of ease.

233. RESTRAINT

1. One who does not restrain himself [from evils and excesses] is ignorant.

234. DEPRAVITIES

1. By keeping away from depravities, you are saved from disgrace.
2. Do not make yourself needless through depravities such that your value is dropped.
3. He who delights in depravities will never succeed.
4. It is sufficient of a depravity for one to be pleased [and impressed] with himself.
5. Decline into depravities easily destroys.

235. SUSTENANCE AND ONE WHO SEEKS IT

1. Make sustenance come down by [giving] charity.
2. Verily Allah, the Glorified, dislikes to put the sustenance of his believing servants except [in places] from where they least expect it.
3. Assistance comes down from Allah to the extent of the provisions [that are required for sustenance].
4. Your sustenance is seeking you, so spare yourself the trouble of seeking it.
5. He who seeks sustenance from the wicked has accepted deprivation.
6. The sustenance of every person is preordained just as the end of his life is predetermined.
7. The sustenance of a person is proportionate to his intention.
8. That which has been decreed for you will come to you, so take it easy in your earning.
9. All of you are the dependants of Allah, and Allah, the Glorified, takes care of His dependants.
10. For every sustenance there is a means, so be moderate in your seeking [it].
11. No [other] seeker will ever overtake you in [acquiring] your sustenance.
12. Nobody will ever overcome you in getting that which has been decreed for you.
13. That which has been apportioned for you will never escape you so be moderate in what you seek.
14. That sustenance which has been decreed for a soul shall not escape it.
15. If sustenance was bestowed based on understanding and intellect, the animals and foolish ones would not live.
16. One who is [too] concerned about his next day's sustenance will never be successful.
17. One of the most pleasant blessings is abundant sustenance.
18. What a good blessing abundant sustenance is!
19. Do not let seeking that which is guaranteed for you be more important to you than the action which has been made obligatory upon you to perform.
20. Do not let the worry of the day which has not come upon you bear on the day which has [already] come upon you, for indeed if it will be from your lifetime, [then] Allah, the Glorified, will grant your sustenance in it and if it is not from your lifetime then what worry do you have for that which is not for you?!
21. Sustenance is not acquired by toiling [for it].
22. No one possesses the ability to withhold sustenance or to bestow it except the Sustainer.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

23. Your sustenance seeks you with more intensity than you seek it, so be moderate in what you seek.
24. Be moderate in what you seek, for how many greedy people have been disappointed and how many who are moderate have not been unsuccessful!
25. Sustenance seeks the one who does not seek it.
26. Sustenance is not acquired by greed or by being sought after.
27. Indeed I will complete my sustenance, and struggle with my [lower] self and will end with my [allotted] portion.
28. Verily you will acquire your share - your sustenance is guaranteed and that which has been decreed for you will be fulfilled, so spare yourself the trouble of the wretchedness of greed and the humiliation of seeking [from others]; trust in Allah and take it easy in your earning.
29. Be satisfied and you will be relaxed.
30. Be satisfied with that which has been apportioned for you and you will be a [true] believer.
31. Be satisfied with the sustenance that has been apportioned for you and you will live a life of prosperity.
32. The sustenance has been apportioned; the greedy has been deprived [of what he seeks beyond his share].
33. One who seeks more [than what has been apportioned for him], falls into loss.
34. The deprived may [also] be granted sustenance.
35. Neither you overtake your death nor will you get the sustenance that is not [decreed] for you, so why are you making yourself miserable O wretched one?!

Notes

1. Rather it is granted by Allah and provided by Him in accordance to His allotment.

236. CONFIDING IN OTHERS

1. One who confides less in others is safe.
2. One who confides a lot in others regrets.
3. Confiding less in people [and not telling them your secrets] is more judicious.

237. THE MESSENGER AND HIS MESSAGE

1. By the intelligence of the messenger and his etiquette, the intelligence of the sender [of the message] is gauged.
2. A person's messenger is the interpreter of his reason, and his written message is more conveying than his speech.
3. Your messenger is the interpreter of your intellect, and your tolerance is an indication of your forbearance.
4. Your messenger is the gauge of your nobility, and your pen is the most eloquent thing that speaks on your behalf.

238. RECTITUDE AND RIGHT GUIDANCE

1. Indeed the intelligent one who is heedless strays from the path of right guidance and the one who strives with seriousness [to find it] gets it.
2. You will never know rectitude until you know the one who has abandoned it.
3. One who seeks right guidance becomes knowledgeable [about it].
4. One who seeks right guidance from the deviated, goes astray.
5. One who opposes his reason follows his desires.
6. The best of paths is [the path of] right guidance.
7. It is possible for the seeker of right guidance to attain it.
8. One who is truthful to you about yourself has indeed guided you aright.
9. There is no going astray with right guidance.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

10. One who is successful in his [attaining] rectitude acquires provisions for his Hereafter.

239. BEING PLEASED AND SATISFIED

1. One who is pleased with the decree [of Allah] is at ease.
2. The thing which is most befitting of true faith is being satisfied [with what has been decrees] and total submission [to Allah].
3. Satisfaction is abundance while disappointment is agony.
4. Satisfaction dispels sadness.
5. Satisfaction [with the decree of Allah] is the fruit of certitude.
6. Satisfaction with the decree of Allah makes great calamities easy [to bear].
7. If you have made a covenant [to believe in Allah] then be satisfied with that which has been decreed against you and for you, and do not have hope in anyone other than Allah, the Glorified, and await that which is brought to you by [divine] decree.
8. Indeed if you are pleased with the decree [of Allah], your lives will become enjoyable and you will attain prosperity.
9. When what you want does not happen, then do not fret about how you were [and be satisfied with the decree of Allah].
10. By satisfaction with the decree of Allah, the strength of [one's] certitude is evinced.
11. Seek the pleasure of Allah and fear His displeasure, and let your heart become unsettled by [your] fear of Him.
12. Seek the pleasure of Allah by being satisfied with His decree.13. Seek the pleasure of Allah, and keep away from His displeasure, for indeed there is none who can save you from His retribution and there is nothing that can make you needless of His forgiveness, and there is no refuge for you from Him except with Him.
13. The fruit of satisfaction is prosperity.
14. The pinnacle of worship is satisfaction [with the decree of Allah].
15. The cornerstone of contentment is satisfaction [with the decree of Allah].
16. Remain satisfied in times of difficulty and ease.
17. Whoever is pleased with [Allah's] decree, his life becomes pleasant.
18. One who is satisfied with the decree [of Allah] takes the changing circumstances [of his life] lightly.
19. Whoever is satisfied with what has been decreed, his certitude is strengthened.
20. One whose satisfaction with what is decreed is good, his patience in [times of] tribulation will be good.
21. One who is pleased with the share allotted to him by Allah does not grieve for that which escapes him.
22. One who is satisfied with what Allah has allotted for him does not become sad about what others possess.
23. Whoever is not satisfied with the decree [of Allah], disbelief seeps into his religion.
24. From the most excellent faith is being pleased with whatever [divine] decree brings.
25. Allah, the Glorified, does not pass any decree for the servant who is satisfied with it but that there is benefit in it for him.
26. Allah, the Glorified, does not repel any of the afflictions of this world and chastisements of the Hereafter from the believer except because of his satisfaction with His decree and his good patience in the face of His trials.
27. What a good companion of faith satisfaction is!
28. What a good expeller of sadness satisfaction with [divine] decree is!
29. He who is satisfied with the decree [of Allah] has acquired abundance.
30. There is no submission like satisfaction [with what has been decreed].
31. Nothing takes away poverty like satisfaction and contentment.
32. It behoves one who is pleased with the decree of Allah, the Glorified, to rely upon Him.
33. The pleasure of Allah, the Glorified, is the nearest goal that can be achieved.
34. The pleasure of Allah, the Glorified, is linked to His obedience.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

35. The sign that Allah, the Glorified, is pleased with His servant is his (the servant's) satisfaction with that which He, the Glorified, has decreed for or against him.
36. The highest goal is in [attaining] the pleasure of Allah.
37. How can the heart that is inclined to this world be capable of being satisfied [with what has been decreed]?!
38. Satisfaction suffices as abundance.
39. Whoever prefers the pleasure of the All-Powerful Lord, then let him speak with words of justice in the presence of the tyrannical ruler.
40. Whoever seeks the pleasure of Allah at the expense of displeasing the people, Allah will turn his dispraiser among the people into his praiser.
41. One who hastens towards the actions that please Allah, the Glorified, and delays acts of disobedience to Him has indeed perfected [his] obedience.
42. Allah! Grant us your pleasure and make us needless of having to stretch out our hands to other than you.
43. Whoever seeks the pleasure of people by displeasing Allah, Allah will turn the one who praises him among the people into one who dispraises him.
44. How great is the wrongdoing of the one who seeks the pleasure of the creation by angering the Creator.
45. One who is pleased with what has been decreed becomes content with little.
46. One who is satisfied with his portion will not be angered by anyone.
47. One who is pleased with his state will not be affected by jealousy.
48. The one who is pleased with the action of a group is like one who participates in it with them, and for everyone who participates in falsehood there are two sins: the sin of being pleased with it and the sin of acting upon it.
49. Every satisfied one is at ease.
50. Be pleased [with Allah's decree] and He will be pleased with you.
51. Always be pleased with what is brought by [divine] decree.
52. One who is satisfied with his [allotted] portion is at ease.

240. DESIRE AND LONGING

1. Desire is the key to difficulty [and hardship].
2. The fruit of desire is hardship.
3. Your longing for the one who has no interest in you is a humiliation.
4. One who desires your company when you advance [in rank] wishes to keep away from you when you fall.
5. One who desires that you remain alive has clutched on to your cord.
6. One who desires that which is with Allah, his prostrations and bowings increase.
7. One who desires that which is with Allah makes his actions sincere.
8. One who desires that which is with Allah attains his hopes.
9. Indeed if you desire [closeness to] Allah, you will become prosperous and will be saved, whereas if you desire the [attainment of this] world, you will be at a loss and will be destroyed.

Notes

1. Some commentators say that this means that just by wishing that someone remain alive, a link is established with that person.

241. LENIENCY AND GENTLENESS

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Leniency is the key to rightness and the trait of the people of understanding.
2. Leniency makes difficulties bearable and eases the harshness of situations.
3. Leniency is the infusion of goodness and the symbol of success.
4. Be lenient and you shall gain success.
5. The best thing is gentleness.
6. The greatest [form of] piety is gentleness.
7. Leniency is the key to success.
8. Leniency is the key to rightness.
9. Gentleness blunts the edge of opposition.
10. Leniency is the symbol of nobility.
11. Leniency is the symbol of aptness.
12. With leniency there is auspiciousness.
13. Leniency leads to peace.
14. Gentleness is the brother of a believer.
15. Being lenient with one's subjects [and dependents] stems from an honourable disposition.
16. When you punish, be lenient.
17. When leniency is unsuitable, then harshness is lenience.
18. Through leniency, magnanimity is completed.
19. Through gentleness, goals are achieved.
20. Through gentleness, difficulties become easy [to bear].
21. Through gentleness, companionship lasts longer.
22. The pinnacle of knowledge is leniency [and compassion].
23. The cornerstone of politics is employing leniency.
24. The gentleness of a person and his generosity endear him to his enemies.
25. Adopt leniency, for indeed it is the key to rightness and the quality of the people of understanding.
26. Adopt gentleness, for whoever is gentle in his actions, his matters will be [successfully] completed.
27. How many difficulties are made easy with gentleness.
28. Let the most favoured of people in your sight be the one who is the most lenient in his actions.
29. Be gentle with the one who is harsh with you, for he will soon become gentle with you.
30. One who acts with leniency, prospers.
31. One who treats others with gentleness, gains success.
32. One who employs leniency, prospers.
33. Whoever employs gentleness, the hard becomes soft for him.
34. One who proceeds with leniency in his matters, acquires his objectives from them.
35. One who employs leniency causes sustenance to flow [in abundance].
36. Gentleness does not exist in anything but that it beautifies it.
37. What a good companion leniency is!
38. The best quality is employing leniency.
39. The best policy is leniency.
40. There is no regret for the one who is very lenient.
41. Violence and gentleness do not go together.
42. There is no quality more honourable than leniency.

Notes

1. Meaning that it never separates from a believer.

242. SELF-SCRUTINY

1. May Allah have mercy on the servant who scrutinizes his sins and fears his Lord.

243. MODE OF TRANSPORT

1. A comfortable mode of transport is one of the two comforts.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

244. THE SOULS

1. [In the Hereafter] the souls are held at ransom by the weight of their sins and have become certain of their unseen fates. Neither can good acts be added [to their record] nor are they given warning about their evil deeds [rather, the harsh punishment of hell awaits them].

245. PEACE OF MIND

1. Peace of mind is in abstinence from worldly pleasures.
2. How close is peace of mind to hardship [and discomfort]!

246. THE INTENDED OBJECTIVE

1. Sometimes the intended objective may be acquired.

247. DISCIPLINE

1. That which infuses discipline is the study of wisdom and overcoming [bad] habits.
2. Discipline is not beneficial except in a woken soul.

248. RESTRAINT

1. He who has no desistance has no restraint.

249. CHARITY

1. Fortify [and protect] your wealth by [giving] charity.
2. And charity [was prescribed as] a means of sustenance.
3. One who pays his zakāt is protected from the greediness of his soul.

250. LAPSES

1. Whoever looks at his own lapses, the faults of others seem trivial to him.
2. Whoever is blind to his own lapses, the errors of others seem great to him.
3. Lapses are a cause of regret.
4. The lapse of one who is [evidently] pious is the worst of lapses and the sickness of ignobility is the most repulsive of sicknesses.
5. The slip of the foot is the easiest to recover from [unlike other lapses].

251. ADULTERY

1. The most despised of creatures in the sight of Allah is the old adulterer.
2. The abandoning of adultery is [prescribed] for safeguarding the descendants and the renouncing of homosexuality is a means of increasing the progeny.
3. A dignified person would never commit adultery.
4. A chaste person does not commit adultery.

252. THE WIFE

1. A righteous wife is one of the two [lofty] acquisitions.
2. An agreeable wife is one of the two comforts.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. The worst of wives is the one who does not comply [with her husband's wishes].
4. The death of one's wife is the sadness of the hour.

253. PROVISION

1. Indeed, you have been commanded to decamp and have been shown your provision [for the journey], so take from this world the provisions that you can hold on to (or that will protect you) tomorrow.
2. Verily the wasting of provisions is from corruption.
3. Take provisions from the days of transience for the everlasting [abode], for you have been shown your provision and commanded to decamp and [have been] driven upon the course.
4. Take from this world the provisions that you can hold on to (or that will protect you) tomorrow and take from the transient for the everlasting.
5. The provision of a person for the Hereafter is piety and God-wariness.
6. You must be well prepared and ready, and increase in your provision [for the Hereafter].
7. I am amazed at the one who knows that he will surely be moving away from his world, how can he not acquire a goodly provision for his Hereafter?!
8. Every person is approaching that which he has sent forward and will be recompensed for his actions.
9. As you send forth, so you shall find [waiting for you in the Hereafter].
10. As you sow, so shall you reap.
11. Let your provision be God-wariness.
12. Wasting of provision is from corruption.
13. That which you send forth today is what you shall come upon tomorrow, so make arrangements for your arrival and send forth [provisions] for your day.

254. RENUNCIATION OF WORLDLY PLEASURES

1. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the better of the two comforts.
2. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the attribute of the God-wary and the quality of the repentant.
3. Renunciation of worldly pleasures means cutting short [one's] aspirations and performing actions with sincerity.
4. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is rarely found [among the people] and is the loftiest thing that is observed; it is praised by everyone but left [unpractised] by the majority of people.
5. Renounce the pleasures of this world and [divine] mercy will descend upon you.
6. Turn away from your [vain desires in this] world and you will be happy with your place of return [in the Hereafter] and will reform your [final] abode.
7. Renounce [vain] pleasures in this world and Allah will show you its flaws, and do not be negligent, for you are not neglected.
8. The best act of worship is renouncing worldly pleasures.
9. The first step of asceticism is renouncing worldly pleasures.
10. The best [form of] renunciation of worldly pleasures is concealing [one's] asceticism.
11. The best garment (or better than wearing the garment) of this world is renouncing it.
12. The one who is most deserving of renouncing worldly pleasures is he who knows the flaws of this world.
13. Verily the renunciation of ignorance is proportionate to the desire for [knowledge and] intelligence.
14. Verily the renunciation of a tyrant's reign is to the extent of the desire for the reign of a just ruler.
15. Verily, renunciation of worldly pleasures means shortening aspirations, being grateful for blessings and keeping away from that which is forbidden; and if this [practice] leaves you then let not the forbidden overcome your patience and do not forget to be thankful for your blessings, for Allah, the Glorified, has left no room for excuse through manifest and clear proofs and books that are open and unambiguous.
16. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is affluence.
17. The root of renunciation of worldly pleasures is the desire for that which is with Allah.
18. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the fruit of religion.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the fruit of certitude.
20. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the root of religion.
21. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the foundation of certitude.
22. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is a profitable trade.
23. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is a quality of the sincere.
24. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the key to goodness.
25. Renunciation of worldly pleasures means shortening aspirations.
26. Renunciation of worldly pleasures leads to asceticism.
27. Renunciation of worldly pleasures means not seeking that which is absent until that which is present [and available] perishes.
28. Renunciation of worldly pleasures is the greatest comfort.
29. If you desire the eternal, then renounce the pleasures of the evanescent world.
30. If you renounce worldly pleasures, you will be free from the wretchedness of this world and prosperous in the everlasting abode.
31. Through renunciation of worldly pleasures, wisdom is brought forth.
32. The fruit of renouncing worldly pleasures is repose.
33. Complete renunciation of worldly pleasures is from the best [act of] faith while desire for this world corrupts conviction.
34. The foundation of generosity is renunciation of worldly pleasures.
35. Your renunciation of this world will save you and your desire for it will cause you to fall into destruction.
36. A person's renunciation of that which perishes is proportionate to his certainty about that which is everlasting.
37. Restraining the soul from the pleasures of this world is the praiseworthy asceticism.
38. Espouse the renunciation of worldly pleasures, for indeed it helps the religion.
39. How can one who does not know the value of the Hereafter renounce worldly pleasures?!
40. How can one who has not killed off his lustful desires reach the essence of asceticism?!
41. Let your renunciation be of that thing which perishes and disappears, for indeed neither will it remain for you nor will you remain for it.
42. He who renounces worldly pleasures will never become poor.
43. Whoever renounces worldly pleasures, tribulations become easy for him [to bear].
44. One who renounces pleasures in this world fortifies [and protects] his religion.
45. Whoever renounces this world, it will not elude him.
46. By renouncing worldly pleasures, the fruit of wisdom comes forth.
47. Never renounce anything until you know what it is.
48. There is no asceticism like refraining from that which is forbidden.
49. There is no benefit in the asceticism of one who does not renounce avarice and adorn himself with piety.
50. Verily the hearts of those who renounce worldly pleasures weep even when they laugh, and their sadness intensifies even when they are [apparently] happy, and their self-loathing increases even though they are [apparently] delighted with what they are given.
51. When the one who renounces worldly pleasures flees from the people, seek him out.
52. When the one who renounces worldly pleasures seeks people, flee from him.
53. Be one who renounces that which the ignorant ones desire.
54. Blessed be the ones who renounce pleasures in the world and desire the [bounties of the] Hereafter. These are the ones who have taken the earth as their carpet, its dust as their beds, its water as their perfume, the Qur'an as their inner garment and supplication as their outer garment, and have subscribed themselves to the ways of the Messiah, Isa son of Maryam ('a).
55. One who neither despairs over the past nor becomes overjoyed with the future has taken asceticism from both its sides.
56. One who renounces [the pleasures of] this world makes light of the tribulations [he faces in it].
57. One who renounces [the pleasures of] this world frees himself and pleases his Lord.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

58. One who renounces [the pleasures of] this world will be delighted by the garden of the abode [of perpetual bliss in the Hereafter].
59. One who does not renounces [the pleasures of] this world will not have a share in the Garden of the Abode.
60. Repose is in renouncing worldly pleasures.
61. Look at the world with the eyes of the abstinent, parting one and do not look at it with the eyes of the adoring, attached one.
62. Renounce the pleasures of this world and turn away from it, and be careful that death does not descend upon you (while you are a runaway from your Lord in its pursuit thereby becoming wretched or) while your heart is attached to anything of it as a result of which you are destroyed.

Notes

1. Zuhd is a term that means being uninterested in and indifferent towards worldly pleasures, material wealth etc. and it is considered to be one of the qualities of the pious people.

255. VISITING

1. Visiting [one's brothers in faith] on a regular basis is protection from lethargy.
2. Visit those who are obedient to Allah for His sake and take guidance from those who have been vested with His authority.
3. Visit each other for the sake of Allah, sit [and mingle] with each other for the sake of Allah, give for the sake of Allah and withhold for the sake of Allah.
4. One whose visits increase, his cheerfulness decreases.

256. ADORNMENT

1. Adornment is in righteous probity, not in elegant clothing.

257. BEGGING AND ASKING PEOPLE

1. Begging weakens the tongue of the speaker, breaks the heart of the courageous hero, puts the free honourable one in the position of a humbled slave, takes away the radiance of one's face and wipes out one's sustenance.
2. Begging is the collar of humiliation, it takes the honour away from the honourable and the stature away from the noble.
3. Humiliation [and disgrace] is in asking from people.
4. Begging is the key to poverty.
5. The bane of asking [others] is lack of success [in getting what one asks for].
6. If you want to be obeyed [or your request to be granted] then ask for that which is feasible.
7. Let your request be for a thing, the charm of which will last for you long after the negative consequences [of your asking] have ended.
8. One who asks properly is aided.
9. Whoever asks [from] other than Allah deserves to be deprived.
10. One who increases his requests from people is humiliated.
11. One who asks for that which he does not deserve is faced with deprivation.
12. One who repeats his request to the people, they get irritated by him.
13. One who asks for that which is above his rank deserves to be deprived.
14. When one does not protect his dignity from [the humiliation of] asking you, then preserve your honour by not turning him away.
15. Your countenance is like frozen water that is melted by asking; so [be careful and] consider whose presence you are melting it in.
16. Do not ask the one from whom you fear deprivation.
17. Never turn away the beggar, even if he exceeds the limits.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

18. Do not turn away the beggar and safeguard your magnanimity by not depriving him.
19. There is no humiliation like asking [for something from others].
20. There is nothing more tormenting than having to ask from the ignorant out of desperation.
21. Verily you are in greater need of the reward for that which you give than the asker is [in need] of that which he takes from you.
22. Verily you will gain more joy by [the reward of] what you have given than the one who seeks from you gains in what he has received from you.
23. Give the beggar before he asks, for indeed if you make it necessary for him to ask, then you will have taken from his dignity that which is greater than what you have given him.
24. Give your wealth generously to the one who has sacrificed his self-respect for you, for indeed the sacrificing of self-respect cannot be matched by anything.
25. Give generously when you are asked.
26. Seeking one's need from he who is not worthy [of being asked] is harder than death.
27. What an evil trait importunity is!
28. Sacrificing one's dignity by begging is greater [in value] than the extent of one's need, even if it is great and even if it is granted.
29. Sacrificing one's dignity in front of the wicked is the greatest death.

258. QUESTION AND ANSWER

1. Make your address polite and you will hear a polite reply.
2. One who hastens to reply does not arrive at the right [answer].
3. Giving correct reply is an evidence of merit.
4. A discourteous reply stems from a discourteous address.
5. When one is asked about that which he knows not, he should never feel ashamed to say: I do not know.
6. Do not use harsh words [or foul language] even if you are unable to reply.
7. Never ask about that which has not [yet] happened, for in that which has already come about there is enough knowledge [that one can gain].
8. Do not be offensive in your address thereby being offended by the rudeness of the reply.
9. One who abandons the words "I don't know" comes upon his [place of] destruction.
10. The person most prepared to [give a] reply is one who does not get angry.
11. Ask and you will learn.
12. When you ask, ask in order to learn and do not ask in order to embarrass [the one whom you are asking]. Indeed the ignorant one who learns is similar to a learned person and verily the learned one who is oppressive is similar to an ignorant person.
13. If you are ignorant then learn, and when you are asked about that which you do not know then say: Allah and His Prophet know better.
14. Too much asking leads to restlessness.
15. One who asks, learns.
16. One who asks, benefits.
17. One who asks properly, learns.
18. One who asks in his young age, answers in his old age.

259. CAUSES AND MEANS

1. The means by which an incapable person achieves his goal is the same one (means) that makes the powerful person incapable to achieving what he seeks.
2. The firmest rope that you can hold on to is the rope between you and Allah.
3. For everything there is a cause.
4. The strongest means [of gaining success in this world and the next] is having excellent [qualities and] merits.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. The best means [to achieve closeness to Allah] is refraining from anger and keeping away from the humiliation of asking [others].

260. COMPETITION

1. If you must be competitors, then compete with each other in establishing the ordinances of Allah and in enjoining good.

261. PROSTRATION AND BOWING

1. The physical prostration is putting the foreheads on the earth and placing the palms and knees on the ground along with the toes of the feet, with complete submissiveness of the heart and sincerity of intention.
2. The spiritual [aspect of] prostration is emptying the heart of [love for] that which perishes, proceeding with firm resolution in endeavouring towards the everlasting, removing pride and fanaticism, cutting off worldly ties and adorning oneself with the etiquettes of the Prophet.
3. What good forms of worship Prostration (sujūd) and bowing (rukū') are.

262. PRISON

1. The prison is one of the two [types of] graves.

263. DISPLEASURE

1. One whose displeasure is much, his pleasure is not known.
2. One whose displeasure is much is not admonished.
3. How ugly is displeasure and how nice pleasure is!
4. Displeasure is enough of a suffering.
5. Whoever is displeased with what has been destined, adversity befalls him.
6. Do not be upset by the displeasure of the one who is pleased with falsehood.
7. Be wary of the displeasure of the One aside from whose obedience nothing can save you, and aside from whose disobedience nothing can destroy you, and aside from whose mercy nothing can accommodate you; and turn to Him and trust in Him. Be wary of the displeasure of the One aside from whose obedience nothing can save you, and aside from whose disobedience nothing can destroy you, and aside from whose mercy nothing can accommodate you; and turn to Him and trust in Him.

264. GENEROSITY

1. Generosity earns love [of people] and adorns one's character.
2. Generosity is one of the two felicities.
3. Generosity clears away sins and attracts the love of the hearts.
4. Generosity and courage are honourable instincts which Allah, the Glorified, puts in the one whom He loves and has subjected to trials.
5. Generosity means being open-handed with your [own] wealth while being cautious with the wealth of others.
6. Generosity is that which one gives [himself], for if he gives after being asked, then it is [a result of] shame and embarrassment.
7. Generosity is the fruit of the intellect and contentment is the evidence of nobility.
8. Generosity and shame are the best characteristics.
9. The most courageous of people is the most generous of them.
10. The most honourable of qualities is generosity, and the most universal in benefit is justice.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

11. The best [form of] generosity is for you to be open-handed with your wealth while being cautious with the wealth of others.
12. Verily the generosity of keeping oneself away from that which others possess is better than the generosity of giving.
13. The best thing by which praise is gained, is generosity; and the thing that draws forth the most abundant, lasting benefits is charity.
14. Generosity is a [righteous] trait; honour is a virtue.
15. Generosity is a [virtuous] quality.
16. Generosity is the adornment of a human being.
17. Generosity sows [the seeds of] love.
18. Generosity is the most honourable habit.
19. Generosity is a quality of the Prophets.
20. Generosity bears the fruit of [spiritual] purity.
21. Generosity covers up [one's] faults.
22. Generosity earns praise.
23. Generosity is the symbol of magnanimity and nobility.
24. Through generosity, actions become beautiful.
25. Through generosity, faults are hidden.
26. Adorn yourself with generosity and piety, for these two are the embellishments of faith and the most honourable of your traits.
27. The best generosity is that which corresponds to the situations of need.
28. Generosity is the cause of adoration.
29. The cause of ascendancy is generosity.
30. The disgrace of generosity is extravagance.
31. He who holds back from giving has oppressed generosity.
32. Espouse generosity, for indeed it is the fruit of the intellect.
33. Espouse generosity and good etiquette for verily these two [traits] increase sustenance and bring about adoration.
34. One's generosity is proportionate to one's magnanimity.
35. Cover up your faults with generosity for it is indeed a covering for faults.
36. In generosity there is affection.
37. Verily the generosity of keeping oneself away from that which others possess is better than the generosity of giving.
38. The best thing by which praise is gained, is generosity; and the thing that draws forth the most abundant, lasting benefits is charity.
39. Generosity is a [righteous] trait; honour is a virtue.
40. Generosity is a [virtuous] quality.
41. Generosity is the adornment of a human being.
42. Generosity sows [the seeds of] love.
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44. Generosity is a quality of the Prophets.
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EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

56. He who holds back from giving has oppressed generosity.
57. Espouse generosity, for indeed it is the fruit of the intellect.
58. Espouse generosity and good etiquette for verily these two [traits] increase sustenance and bring about adoration.
59. One's generosity is proportionate to one's magnanimity.
60. Cover up your faults with generosity for it is indeed a covering for faults.
61. In generosity there is affection.
62. Abundance of generosity increases [one's] friends and reforms [one's] enemies.
63. If you were to see generosity in the form of a man, you would surely see him as a handsome person, pleasing to look at.
64. When there is neither generosity nor shame in a person, then death is better for him than life.
65. What a good trait generosity is!
66. There is no merit like generosity.
67. There can be no generosity with nothingness.
68. Generosity is showing affection to the beggar and giving open-handedly.

Notes

1. Meaning one has to possess something in order to be generous with it.

265. APTNESS

1. One who acts aptly, acquires [success].

266. MIRAGE

1. One who strives in seeking a mirage, his hardship is prolonged and his thirst increases.
2. One who hopes to quench his thirst from a mirage, his hope will be dashed and he will die of thirst.
3. One who is deceived by the mirage [of this world], the means [of attaining prosperity in the Hereafter] are cut off for him.

267. DISMISSAL

1. Dismissal with kindness is one of the two reliefs.

268. INWARD THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

1. The goodness of inward thoughts is evidence of the soundness of insight.
2. Blessed is the one whose inward thoughts are good, whose outward [character] is righteous and who does not harm the people.
3. When the consciences are being reformed, the hidden rancour becomes evident.
4. When the outward gets corrupted, the inward also get corrupted.
5. One whose inward [feeling] is good, his outward [character] is righteous.
6. One whose inward [feeling] is good [and honourable] is not afraid of anyone.

269. SECRET AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Protect your affair and do not give away your secret in marriage to whoever proposes!
2. Keep your secret to yourself and neither entrust it to a judicious one who may err nor to an ignorant one who may betray [your trust].
3. The best secret discussion is that which is founded on religion and God-wariness, and is based on following the path of guidance and opposing vain desires.
4. Man is more protective of his secret.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. Divulging [secrets] is the trait of outsiders [not that of believing Muslims].
6. Divulging the secret that has been entrusted to you is a [form of] betrayal.
7. Three people are not to be trusted with a secret: the woman, the telltale and the fool.
8. Your secret is a source of happiness for you if you conceal it but if you divulge it, it is your destruction.
9. He who divulges his secrets does not remain safe.
10. Your secret is your prisoner but if you divulge it, you become its prisoner.
11. Be stingy with your secrets and do not divulge the secret that has been entrusted to you, for indeed divulging [it] is betrayal.
12. Every time the keepers of secrets increase, [chances of] its divulgence becomes greater.
13. One who conceals the secret [that has been entrusted to him] is loyal and trustworthy.
14. If a person were to use his intellect, he would protect his secret from the one who has revealed [another's secret] to him and would not inform anyone of it.
15. One who reveals your secret has ruined your affair.
16. One who conceals his secret has the choice [of doing as he wills with it] in his hand.
17. One who entrusts his secret to an unreliable person has forfeited his secret.
18. One who divulges a secret that has been entrusted to him has betrayed [a trust].
19. Whoever is weak in keeping his own secret, he will be even weaker in keeping the secret of others.
20. One who is too weak to protect his [own] secret will not be strong enough to protect the secret of others.
21. One who safeguards his secret from you has actually accused you [of being untrustworthy].
22. From the ugliest form of betrayal is divulging a secret.
23. I have never blamed anyone for divulging my secret when I was more unaccommodating of it than him [by revealing it to him in the first place].
24. The basis of a secret is its concealment.
25. Do not entrust your secret to one who has no trustworthiness.
26. Do not confide in the one who would divulge your secret.
27. Do not inform your wife and your servant about your secret as they will [use it to] subjugate you.
28. Do not confide in the ignorant one with any secret that he is unable to conceal.
29. One whose breast cannot accommodate his secret has no preservation (or prudence).
30. The speech of every gathering is [supposed to be] rolled up with its carpet.
31. If you gain confidence in your close friend then safeguard some of your affairs and conceal some of your secrets [from him], for it is possible that you may regret [revealing it all to him] sometime in the future.

270. HAPPINESS AND PUTTING JOY IN THE HEARTS

1. Happiness opens up the spirit and stimulates vitality.
2. At times happiness becomes roiled.
3. Perhaps [the joy of] happiness may turn bitter.
4. Every joy [in this world] turns sour [eventually].
5. No one puts joy in a [believer's] heart except that Allah creates a grace from that joy, so whenever any calamity befalls him, it (the grace) flows over it just like the flowing of water until it expels the calamity from him just as the unfamiliar camel is expelled from the group of camels.

271. EXTRAVAGANCE

1. Extravagance is blameworthy in everything except in doing good deeds.
2. Verily giving this wealth where it has no right to be given is wastefulness and extravagance.
3. The ugliest [form of] giving is extravagance.
4. The refusal of the economizer is better than the granting of the extravagant.
5. Verily the withholding of preserver is more graceful than the giving of the squanderer.
6. Extravagance wipes out the plentiful.
7. Extravagance depletes the abundant.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

8. Wastefulness is the symbol [and cause] of poverty.
9. Wastefulness is a penniless companion.
10. Abandon extravagance by economizing, and recall [your] tomorrow today.
11. Eschew extravagance, for neither is the generosity of the extravagant praised nor is his indigence sympathized [with].
12. The cause of poverty is extravagance.
13. You must abandon wastefulness and extravagance, and adopt the qualities of justice and equity.
14. Extravagance is censured in everything except in performance of virtuous acts and excessiveness in obedience [and worship of Allah].
15. Then shun extravagance by economizing, and recall today [what you will need] tomorrow; hold on to wealth [only] to the extent of your necessity and send forth the surplus for the day when you will need it.
16. Wastefulness is enough of an extravagance.
17. Too much extravagance destroys.
18. There is no honour in extravagance.
19. One who takes pride in wastefulness will be humiliated by indigence.
20. That which is above sufficiency is extravagance.
21. There is no ignorance like wastefulness.
22. There is no affluence with extravagance.
23. Woe be to the extravagant! How far he is from reforming himself and setting right his affair!

272. THEFT

1. And the shunning of theft [has been prescribed] as a means of instilling virtue.

273. AID

1. Aid your brother in every situation, and go with him wherever he goes.

274. FELICITY

1. Felicity is that which leads [one] to success.
2. The signs of felicity are sincerity [of intentions] in action.
3. Having a heart that is free of rancour and jealousy is from the felicity of a servant.
4. Felicity is gained by hastening good deeds and pure [and virtuous] actions.
5. The felicity of a person is [in] contentment and satisfaction.
6. The felicity of a man is in safeguarding his faith and working for his Hereafter.
7. It is enough of a felicity for a person that he be deemed trustworthy in religious and worldly affairs.
8. It is enough of a felicity for a person to turn away from that which perishes and become occupied with that which is everlasting.
9. You will never know the sweetness of felicity until you taste the bitterness of misfortune.
10. It is part of felicity to be granted success in performing righteous deeds.
11. It is from the perfection of felicity for one to strive for the betterment of the [whole] community.
12. Successfully attaining what is sought is part of felicity.
13. From the felicity of a person is his showing benevolence to those who are deserving of it.
14. A person does not attain felicity except through the obedience of Allah, the Glorified, and a person does not become wretched except by disobeying Allah.
15. No one attains felicity except by upholding the bounds of Allah and no one becomes wretched except by disregarding them.
16. It is from the felicity of a person that his good turns are done to one who thanks him and his benevolence is shown to one who is not ungrateful to him.
17. He who makes his brothers miserable does not gain felicity.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

18. How close are felicities to misfortunes!
19. How far is repose in ease and inactivity from acquiring felicity!
20. When the presentation [of deeds] in front of Allah, the Glorified, takes place, felicity is differentiated from wretchedness.

275. THE FELICITOUS

1. The felicitous is one who considers that which is lost [to him] as insignificant.
2. Felicitous is one who fears the punishment [of Allah] so he has faith, and hopes for divine reward so he does good deeds.
3. Verily the most felicitous of people is one who has an exhorter in himself [that urges him] to obey Allah.
4. Felicitous is one who makes his obedience [and worship] sincere.
5. If you would like to be the most felicitous of people through what you have learnt, then act upon it.
6. Indeed only he is felicitous who fears divine punishment so he safeguards himself, and hopes for divine reward so he does good, and longs for Paradise so he wakes up [to worship] in the night.

276. STRIVING AND SEEKING

1. Rolling up one's clothes [in preparation] for serious work is from [one's] good fortune.
2. Seek and you shall find.
3. It is upon you to strive but it is not upon you to succeed.
4. Never will your striving for that which improves you and earns divine reward be wasted.
5. One who hastens his pace arrives at the place of rest [and repose].
6. One whose efforts are good, his place in the Hereafter will be good.
7. Strive to free your necks [from the shackles of this world] before the doors of ransom are shut.
8. Whoever hastens to the people with that which they dislike, they will speak about him that which they do not know.
9. Many a person strives in that which is harmful for him.
10. Many a person is awake so that another can sleep.
11. Many a person strives for one who is seated [doing nothing].

277. TRAVEL

1. Travelling is one of the two torments.

278. THE ENVOY

1. The lies of an envoy give rise to corruption, cause the failure of the intended objective, nullify judiciousness and invalidate firm resolution.

279. SPILLING BLOOD

1. Spilling blood without just cause invites the descending of divine wrath and the cessation of blessings.

280. THE SHIPS OF SALVATION

1. Cut through the waves of discord by [embarking on] the ships of salvation.

281. DIMWITTEDNESS

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Beware of dimwittedness for verily it causes one to be deserted by his friends.
2. Dimwittedness is idiocy.
3. Dimwittedness [and insolence] is an offence.
4. Dimwittedness is the key to ridicule.
5. Dimwittedness attracts evil.
6. Shun dimwittedness, for verily it belittles a person and dishonor's him.
7. The weapon of ignorance is dimwittedness.
8. Dimwittedness is enough as a disgrace.
9. Increased dimwittedness brings about ill feelings and gives rise to hatred.
10. Dimwittedness is not like intelligence.

282. THE DIMWIT

1. The wise person gets most fatigued when he speaks to a dimwit.
2. The most dim-witted of all fools is the one who boasts with foul language.
3. One who enters the circle of dimwits is debased.
4. One who censures a dimwit has exposed himself to insult.
5. Refraining from replying a dimwit is the best reply you can give him.
6. The dimwit does not know the right of the wise one.
7. Nothing corrects the dimwit but bitter [and harsh] speech.
8. Accompanying the dimwit corrupts one's character.

283. MALADIES

1. It is from the [good] health of the bodies that maladies originate.
2. There is no affliction greater than the unrelenting physical ailment.
3. There is no escape for bodies from maladies.

Notes

1. Because when one is healthy, he tends to forget that he can fall sick and does or consumes things that make him sick.

284. CALMNESS AND SOLEMNITY

1. Solemnity is the ornament of the intellect.
2. Solemnity supports (or gives rise to) forbearance.
3. Calmness is a sign of intelligence.
4. Solemnity is evidence of nobility.
5. If you act with solemnity you will be honored.
6. Through solemnity, one's reverence increases.
7. Espouse calmness, for indeed it is the best embellishment.
8. Be solemn when among the people and oft-remembering [of Allah and His bounties] when alone.
9. Let solemnity be your trait, for one whose silliness increases is scorned.
10. One who acts with solemnity is revered.
11. One whose solemnity increases, his exaltedness increases.
12. Espousing solemnity protects one from the lowliness of impetuosity.
13. Calmness is an excellent quality.
14. Solemnity is an excellent trait.
15. The solemnity of a man adorns him and his silliness tarnishes him.
16. The solemnity of an elderly person is a light and an embellishment.
17. The solemnity of old age is more beloved to me than the vigor of youth.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

285. THE PRECEDING

1. Many a thing that has been sent ahead (or has been pillaged) returns back [as it was before].

286. SALĀMS AND GREETINGS

1. The most miserly of people is the only who is stingy with his Salām.
2. Offering greetings is one of the virtuous morals and traits.

287. PEACE AND RECONCILIATION

1. Peace is the fruit of forbearance.
2. Peace is the cause of security and the sign of steadfastness.
3. Be peaceful with people and you will be safe; work for the Hereafter and you will be successful.
4. Whoever is peaceful with the people, his friends increase and his enemies decrease?
5. Whoever is peaceful with the people, his faults remain hidden.
6. One who is peaceful with the people gains security.
7. One who is pleased to live peacefully with the people will be safe from their adversities.
8. I found the reconciliation that does not weaken Islam to be more beneficial than war.
9. There is no outcome sounder than the outcomes of peace.

288. ISLAM

1. Islam means submission [to the will of Allah], and submission means certitude, and certitude means attestation, and attestation means confirmation, and confirmation means execution, and execution means action.
2. Verily Islam has a goal, so strive towards its goal and proceed towards Allah by fulfilling that which He has ordained upon you of His rights.
3. Islam is the most illuminated course.
4. And he ('a) said about Islam: It is an instruction for the resolute, a sign for the one who examines it [carefully], a lesson for the one who takes heed and a salvation for the one who accepts it.
5. The embellishment of Islam is performing righteous actions.
6. Allah has prescribed Islam for you and has made its laws easy, and He has strengthened its pillars against those who wage war with it.
7. The outward side of Islam is radiant and its inward aspect is elegant.
8. Islam [has been prescribed] as a security from dangers.
9. The basis of Islam is truthfulness [in speech].
10. There is no fortress better fortified than Islam.
11. Islam is in need of faith.
12. Become a Muslim and you shall be safe [in the Hereafter].

289. THE MUSLIMS

1. The best of all Muslims in practicing Islam is he whose efforts are for his Hereafter and whose fear [of Allah's wrath] is balanced with his hope [in His mercy].
2. Verily the Muslims (or the believers) are humble.
3. One who accepts Islam [and submits to the will of Allah] remains safe [in the Hereafter].
4. One who practices Islam properly is [truly] guided.

290. SUBMISSION TO THE WILL OF ALLAH

1. Submission means not blaming [Allah for what happens].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. If you submit your soul to Allah, your soul remains safe.
3. The practice of the righteous people is complete submission [to the will of Allah].
4. Submit to Allah and your Hereafter will be saved.
5. Submit yourselves to the command of Allah and the command of His chosen servant, for verily you will never go astray with submission.
6. The end result of [complete] submission [to the will of Allah] is success in reaching the Abode of Bounties.
7. In submission there is faith.
8. Guided is the one who submits to the guidance of Allah and His Prophet and the one vested with His authority.
9. There is no faith better than surrendering to the will of Allah.
10. Verily if you submit to Allah, you will be safe and successful.
11. The root of faith is complete submission to the command of Allah.
12. One who submits to Allah remains safe.
13. Whoever surrenders to Allah will be granted security by Him and whoever wages war with Allah will be destroyed by Him.

291. SECURITY

1. One who seeks security remains steadfast [on the straight path].
2. One who desires security should adopt moderation.
3. One who wishes for security keeps himself steadfast on the straight path.
4. One who loves security must prefer poverty [over wealth] and one who loves comfort must prefer abstinence from pleasures in this world.
5. One who has three [qualities] in him, will remain safe both in this world and the next: He enjoins good and follows it himself, He forbids evil and keeps away from it himself, and he preserves the boundaries [and ordinances] of Allah, the Sublime and the Exalted.
6. There is no preservation more averting [of harm] than security [that is granted by Allah].
7. There is no attire more appealing than security [and well-being].
8. Many a person remains safe after regret.

292. THE ONE WHO SURRENDERS

1. Everyone who surrenders [to Allah] is protected.
2. One who surrenders [to Allah] remains safe.
3. One who surrenders himself to Allah is supported [by Him].
4. One who submits his affair to Allah is supported [by Him].
5. The one who surrenders [to Allah] is protected.

293. FORGETFULNESS

1. Forgetfulness is the reaper of longing [and desire].
2. One who forgets about what has been robbed from him, it is as if he has not been robbed.

294. CONDOLENCES AND CONGRATULATIONS

1. He ('a) consoled a man whose son passed away and [at the same time] was blessed with the birth of [another] son saying: May Allah make your reward great [for your patience] in that which He took away, and may His blessings be with you in that which He has bestowed [upon you].

295. MIEN

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. How good a guidance having a good mien is!

296. HEARING AND SIGHT

1. Allah, the Glorified, has granted you with hearing so that it may heed [and comprehend] that which is concerns it and with sight so that what is dark for it may be brought to light [and seen clearly].

297. LISTENING AND THE LISTENER

1. May Allah have mercy on the servant who hears a ruling so he heeds it, is invited to the right path so he approaches it, and holds on to the guide so he is saved.
2. Knowledge is not ruined except by the miscomprehension of the listener.
3. Listen and you will learn; remain silent and you will be safe.
4. One who listens well benefits quickly.
5. Do not desire for everything that you hear, for this suffices as gullibility (or foolishness).
6. Train your ears to listen well and do not pay attention to that which does not increase anything useful for you by listening to it, for verily this corrodes the hearts and leads to dispraise.
7. The listener is a partner of the speaker.

298. RIGHTEOUS PRACTICES

1. Do not discontinue the good practices that have been [previously] acted upon, and which the people have become familiar with, and which the masses have found suitable.

299. DOING WRONG TO OTHERS

1. Beware of doing wrong [to others], for indeed it is a vile quality and verily the one who hurts others will surely be thrown into hell because of his wrongs.
2. Verily if you do wrong [to others] then you are only debasing and harming yourself.
3. Counter the wrongs [of others] by doing good [to them].
4. One who is thanked for doing wrong is [actually] mocked for it.
5. One who wrongs his subjects pleases his enviers.
6. One who wrongs others brings upon himself a severe reprisal.
7. Whoever treats people badly, they requite him with the same treatment.
8. One who proceeds in the course of his offences stumbles in his progress.
9. Do not wrong the person who does good to you, for one who wrongs the person who does him a favour will be denied favours [in the future].
10. Whoever wrongs his [own] family, no hope [of any goodness] can be attached to him.

300. PROCRASTINATION

1. How many a person has postponed doing something until death falls upon him!
2. The one who delays seeking repentance is in the greatest danger of the onslaught of death.
3. One who procrastinates in seeking repentance has no faith.

301. EMINENCE AND THE EMINENT

1. The eminent one is envied and the munificent one is loved and adored.
2. The eminent person is one who bears the burdens of his brothers and is neighborly to his neighbor.
3. The eminent person is one who neither flatters nor deceives, nor is he beguiled by greedy ambitions.
4. The eminent person is one who bears the responsibility of providing [for others] and is generous with his assistance.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. The completion of eminence is in taking the initiative to do good to others.
6. The eminent among the people in this world are the generous ones and in the Hereafter, the God-wary.
7. The excellence of the eminent ones is in [their] devout worship [of Allah].
8. Righteous action, aiding the aggrieved and inviting guests [to one's home] are instruments [and means] of eminence.
9. One whose brothers have to turn to other than him [for their needs] has not attained eminence.
10. Listening to the complaint of the aggrieved is part of eminence.
11. He who does not grant generously has not perfected [his] eminence.
12. He whose brothers need to turn to other than him [for help] has not achieved eminence.
13. There is no honour like eminence.
14. There is no eminence with vengeance.
15. There is no eminence in one who has a bad character.
16. He who does not support [and provide for] his brothers does not gain eminence.
17. There is no eminence in the one who lacks generosity.
18. Eminence is not perfected except by bearing the burdens [of others] and doing good turns.

302. MARKETS

1. Be wary of the sitting in the marketplaces, for indeed they are the locations of mischief and the visiting places of Satan.
2. The gatherings of the marketplaces are the visiting places of Satan.

303. NIGHT VIGIL

1. Night vigil is one of the two lives.
2. Night vigil is the garden of those who yearn [nearness of Allah].
3. Night vigil is the insignia of the pious and the quality of those who yearn.
4. Keeping vigil at night in the remembrance [and worship] of Allah is the devotion of the Gnostics and the delight of the Near Ones.
5. Keeping vigil at night in the worship of Allah is the spring of the friends [of Allah] and the garden of the felicitous.
6. Keeping vigil at night in the remembrance [and worship] of Allah is the prize of the friends [of Allah] and the practice of the God-wary.
7. Keeping vigil at night in the remembrance of Allah is the opportunity of the felicitous and the promenade of the friends [of Allah].
8. Keep vigil at night and make your stomachs lean; and take away from your bodies so that you may be generous with it upon your souls.
9. The best of worship is staying awake at night in the remembrance of Allah, the Glorified.
10. What a good helper of worship night vigil is!

304. FACILITATION

1. Facilitating [and making things easy for others] makes sustenance flow abundantly.

305. MODE OF CONDUCT

1. The most loathsome mode of conduct is inequity.
2. Through an equitable conduct, the adversary is overpowered.
3. Good conduct is the sign of a good conscience.
4. Good conduct is the beauty of power and the fortress of authority.
5. One whose conduct is evil, his demise makes the people happy.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

6. One whose conduct is evil will never be safe at any time.
7. Woe be to the one whose conduct is evil, whose authority is oppressive, and who tyrannizes and infringes upon the rights [of those who are under him].

306. ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

1. The most difficult of administrative policies is the removal of habits [and customs].
2. Tyranny is indeed an evil administrative policy.
3. The beauty of politics is [maintaining] justice in authority and pardoning despite having power [to punish].
4. Good administration is the mainstay of the citizenry.
5. Good administration makes leadership last.
6. One whose administration is good, obeying him becomes obligatory.
7. One whose administration is good, his leadership lasts.
8. One who falls short in administration [and politics] is poor in [and incapable of] leadership.
9. The foundation of administration is justice.
10. There is no leadership like [practicing] justice in administration.
11. Sovereignty is administration.
12. One who aspires to rise to power is patient in the face of the torment of politics.

307. YOUTH

1. Two things whose value is not understood except by the one who has lost them are youth and health.
2. The ignorance of a youth is excused and his knowledge is undermined.
3. Are those who are the prime of youth awaiting anything other than the stooping of old age?
4. Youthfulness and senility do not go together.

308. OVEREATING AND GLUTTONY

1. Be wary of gluttony, for whoever persists in it, his maladies increase and his dreams get corrupted.
2. Be wary of gluttony, for indeed it causes hardening of the heart, sluggishness in prayer and corruption of the body.
3. Gluttony prevents astuteness.
4. One who is cloyed by gluttony is obstructed by it from astuteness.
5. There is no astuteness with gluttony.
6. Gluttony and astuteness do not go together.
7. Overeating corrupts wisdom.
8. Gluttony obstructs astuteness.
9. Eating to one's fill corrupts piety.
10. When the stomach gets filled with the permissible, the heart becomes blind to righteousness.
11. What an evil companion of piety overeating is!
12. Habitual overeating leads to a variety of ailments.
13. Overeating brings about insolence and corrupts piety.
14. One who increases his overeating is cloyed by his gluttony.
15. Overeating and performing one's obligation do not go together.
16. How helpful to sins overeating is!
17. You must avoid habitual overeating, for verily it induces maladies and foment diseases.

309. VILIFICATION

1. One who informs you of your vilification has [himself] vilified you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

310. COURAGE AND THE COURAGEOUS

1. Courage is one of the two honours.
2. Courage is a ready support and an evident merit.
3. Courage is an embellishment, cowardice is a disgrace.
4. Courage is present honour, cowardice is evident dishonour.
5. The fruit of courage is a sense of honour.
6. The alms-tax of courage is struggling in the way of Allah.
7. The courage of a man is proportionate to his ambition, and his sense of honour is equivalent to his zeal.
8. It is to the extent of [one's] zeal that courage is shown.
9. Fighting while dismounted [in battle] demonstrates the courage of champions.
10. The bane of courage is loss of resolve.

311. DIFFICULTIES

1. Be patient in [the face of] difficulties and dignified in [times of] turbulent upheavals.
2. It is for difficult times that [the friendships of important] men are preserved.
3. Be intent on [braving] difficulty when nothing will free you except difficulty.

312. EVIL AND THE WICKED

1. Beware of surrounding yourself with evil, for you will be affected by it yourself before [harming] your enemy and you will destroy your religion by it before conveying it to others.
2. The greatest evil is in disparaging the painful advice of the compassionate, sincere adviser and being deceived by the sweetness of the flattery of the malicious praiser.
3. Verily in evil there is impudence.
4. Evil is impudence.
5. Delaying of evil is advantageous to good.
6. Evil is [a cause of] regret.
7. Evil makes its rider fall.
8. Evil is the ugliest of gates.
9. Evil is pestilent speech.
10. Evil is the symbol of destruction.
11. Evil is the carrier of misdeeds.
12. Evil degrades and strikes down.
13. Evil is punishable and brings dishonour (or is requited).
14. Considering evil to be loathsome impels one to refrain from it.
15. Delaying of evil is a benefit for good.
16. The consolidation of evil is in being deceived by respite [from chastisement] and reliance on [one's own] action.
17. The consolidation of evil is in association with a wicked companion.
18. The attractiveness of evil is avarice.
19. The consolidators of evil are obstinacy and increased quarrelsomeness.
20. Many an evil may suddenly come upon you from whence you least expect it.
21. Increased wickedness is [a sign of] vileness and abjectness.
22. Counter evil with good.
23. Obedience to the calls of the wicked corrupts the outcome of matters.
24. He who embarks on evil is successful in attaining it.
25. The doer of evil is worse than the evil [itself].
28. Doing evil is a [means of] revilement.
29. None shall be punished for an evil act except its doer.
30. There is nothing worse than evil except its retribution.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

31. There is nothing more corrupting for affairs or more destructive to the community than evil.
32. He who does not wear the gown of good has not disrobed from evil.
33. One who plunges into the depths of evil meets with danger [and adversity].
34. One who does evil has [actually] transgressed against his soul.
35. One whose evil is too much, [even] his companion is not safe from him.
36. Whoever abandons evil, the doors of good are opened for him.
37. One who lays the foundation of evil cause has [actually] instituted it against himself.
38. One who provokes a latent evil, in it will be his own destruction.
39. One who harbor's evil feelings [and ill will] for others has actually harmed himself.
40. Whoever strips his heart of evil, his religion is secured and his conviction is confirmed.
41. One who does not know the harmfulness of evil is not capable of desisting from it.
42. One who repels evil with good, triumphs?
43. One who hates evil is safeguarded [from it].
44. One of the greatest deceptions is making evil appear good.
45. The 'evil' that is followed by Paradise is not [really] evil.
46. The foundation of evil is avarice.
47. One who is cautious of evil is like the one who does good.
48. Never count as good that by which you attain evil.
49. It behooves the one who recognizes the wicked to disassociate himself from them.
50. The evil of a man is evinced by his increased greed and his intense avarice.
51. How bad a provision evil action is!
52. The most severely punished thing is evil.
53. Evil is the riding mount of greed and vain desire is the riding mount of discord.
54. Evil is the ugliest of gates and its doer is the worst of companions.
55. Evil is concealed in everyone's nature, so if its possessor overcomes it, it remains hidden and if he doesn't overcome it, it is manifested.
56. Scythe the evil from the breasts of others be uprooting it from your [own] breast.
57. Efface evil from your heart, [and as a result] your soul will be purified and your actions will be accepted.
58. When you see evil then distance yourselves from it.
59. The one who gains victory by evil is [in actual fact] defeated.
60. Keep away from evil, for verily more evil than the evil [itself] is its doer.
61. It is the habit of the wicked to trouble [their] friends.
62. The habit of the wicked is harboring enmity for the righteous.
63. Every victor who gains victory by evil is [in actual fact] defeated.
64. The wicked person does not think good of anyone because he does not see them except through [the lenses of] his own nature.
65. Be wary of the wicked one during the coming of power [and authority], that he does not cause it to be taken away from you and during its departure [from you], that he does not gather support against you.
66. Be careful not to be deceived by the good act that the wicked one does by mistake.
67. Be careful not to be repelled by the evil act that the righteous one does by mistake.
68. Keep away from the wicked and sit in the company the virtuous.
69. The coming to power of the wicked is the tribulation of the virtuous.
70. The most evil of all is one who is not ashamed of [his actions in front of] the people and does not fear Allah, the Glorified.
71. The most evil of all people is one who boasts about his evil.

313. HONOUR AND THE HONOURABLE

1. Honor is attained by earnest endeavors not by worn-out bones [of one's ancestors].
2. The greatest honour is humility.
3. The best honour is good etiquette.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. The most honourable of honours is knowledge.
5. The best honour is doing good to others.
6. The best honour is desisting from harming others and doing good to others.
7. Honour is a virtue.
8. Honour is doing good to one's kinsfolk.
9. Indeed honour is only attained by intellect and etiquette, not because of wealth and lineage.
10. The ladder of honour is humility and generosity.
11. The honour of a believer is his faith and his prestige is by his obedience [to Allah].
12. The honour of a man is his integrity and his beauty is his magnanimity.
13. One who knows the significance of his honour safeguards it from the lowliness of his base desires and falsity of his aspirations.
14. Holding on to comprehensive merit (or merits) is from the perfection of honour.
15. Honour is not perfected except through generosity and humility.
16. The honourable person is the one whose attributes are honourable.
17. The peripheries are the sitting places of the honourable.
18. The honourable person is not made reckless by the status he attains, even if it becomes as great as a mountain that is not shaken by strongest winds; and the lowly is made careless by the most inferior position, just as the grass that is moved by the passing breeze.
19. The honourable one never oppresses [others].

Notes

1. One should not consider himself honourable just because of his lineage.

314. EAST AND WEST

1. He ('a) was asked about the distance between the east and the west so he replied: It is a day's journey for the sun.

315. POLYTHEISM

1. The most harmful thing is polytheism.
2. The smallest amount of showing off is polytheism.
3. Verily the slightest showing off is polytheism.
4. Ascribing partners [to Allah] is disbelief.
5. The bane of faith is ascribing partners to Allah.
6. The cause of destruction is polytheism.

316. PARTNERSHIP

1. Establish partnership with the one to whom sustenance has drawn near, for verily he is worthier of success and more befitting of prosperity.

317. VORACIOUSNESS AND THE VORACIOUS

1. Voraciousness tarnishes the soul, corrupts the religion and debases chivalry.
2. Beware of voraciousness, for verily it is a destructive quality.
3. Beware of voraciousness, for how many a food has prevented numerous other foods [from being consumed]!
4. You must refrain from voraciousness, for indeed it corrupts piety and causes one to enter the fire of hell.
5. Refrain from voraciousness, for verily it is the root of every vileness and the foundation of every depravity.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

6. Beware of the vileness of voraciousness and greed, for verily it is the root of all evil, the plantation of disgrace, the debaser of the soul and the exhauster of the body.
7. Voraciousness is [a cause of] ignominy.
8. Voraciousness invites [one] towards evil.
9. Voraciousness is the beginning of avarice.
10. Voraciousness is the trait of the filthy.
11. Voraciousness increases anger.
12. Voraciousness is an accumulator of the worst faults.
13. Voraciousness is the foundation of every evil.
14. Voraciousness is from bad morals.
15. Through voraciousness morals are tainted.
16. What a bad character trait voraciousness is!
17. The fruit of voraciousness is rushing towards faults [and vices].
18. The cornerstone of [all] flaws is voraciousness.
19. The weapon of avarice is voraciousness.
20. Counter voraciousness with chastity [and moderation].
21. Voraciousness is enough of a destruction.
22. For everything there is a seed, and the seed of evil is voraciousness.
23. There is no chastity with voraciousness.
24. One whose soul is voracious becomes disgraced despite his affluence.
25. Everything other than voraciousness is chastity.
26. Every voracious one is tormented.
27. The voracious one will never be seen happy.

318. SATAN

1. Be cautious of the enemy that enters the breast stealthily and whispers in the ears secretly.
2. Beware of the enemy of Allah, Iblīs, that he should not infect you with his disease [of evil] or entice you with his cavalry and his infantry, for he has aimed at you with the arrow of [false] threats and shot at you from close range.
3. He (Satan) has made them (the people) the target of his arrows, the ground that he steps on and the handle that he holds.
4. They have taken Satan as the overseer of their affairs and he has made them his partners [in crime], so he hatches [his eggs] in their breasts and creeps and crawls into their laps. He sees with their eyes and speaks with their tongues. He leads them to misdeeds and adorns for them idle talk like the action of one whom Satan has made partner in his domain and speaks falsehood through his tongue.
5. Your Lord, the Glorified, called you but you turned away and fled, and Satan called you so you responded and drew closer [to him].
6. Stand against Satan through struggle and overpower him by opposition, [by doing this] your souls will be purified and your statuses will be elevated in the sight of Allah.
7. The deception of Satan allures and entices.
8. Do not follow the claimants [of Islam] whose dirty water you drink along with your clean one, whose sicknesses you mix with your health and whose falsehood you allow to enter into your rightful matters.
9. Never allot a portion for Satan in your actions and do not give him access to your soul.

319. BEING OCCUPIED

1. Occupy yourself with that which you are answerable for.
2. One who is occupied by the unimportant loses that which is more important.
3. He who puts Paradise and hell in front of him is [always] occupied.
4. He one whose goal is salvation and attaining the pleasure of Allah is [always] occupied.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

320. THE INTERCESSOR AND INTERCEDER

1. The intercessor is the wing of the seeker [which helps him attain what he seeks].
2. The interceder of a criminal is his humility in seeking pardon.
3. The interceder of a sinner is his admission (of guilt), his repentance and his apology.
4. The interceder of mankind [on the Day of Reckoning] acting upon the right and adhering to the truth.

321. DISSENSION

1. With dissension there is aversion.

322. WRETCHEDNESS

1. Every wretchedness is [moving] towards ease.
2. Collecting the [wealth that is] forbidden is part of wretchedness.
3. Corrupting one's Hereafter is from wretchedness.
4. One of the signs of wretchedness is cheating one's friend.
5. One of the signs of wretchedness is offending the virtuous.
6. It is from the wretchedness of a person for his certitude to get corrupted by doubt.
7. It is from wretchedness for a person to safeguard his world at the expense of his religion.
8. Corruption of intention is from wretchedness.
9. Verily from wretchedness is corruption of one's Hereafter.

323. THE WRETCHED

1. The wretched is one who is proud of his condition and is beguiled by the deception of his hopes.
2. The most wretched among you are the most greedy among you.
3. The most wretched of [all] people is one who sells his religion for someone else's worldly gain.
4. How many a wretched person has been visited by his death while he is striving to acquire [worldly gain].

Notes

1. Since any worldly gains he has will be transferred to his heirs after his death.

324. GRATITUDE AND THE GRATEFUL

1. Gratitude is one of the two rewards.
2. Gratitude for blessings is a recompense for its past and a source of its [increase in the] future.
3. Gratitude has greater value than a good action because the gratitude lasts while the good action comes to an end.
4. Be grateful and you will increase.
5. Continue being grateful and the blessing upon you will continue.
6. Occupy yourself in being grateful for the blessing rather than being delighted by it.
7. Look frequently at those over whom you have been given superiority, for verily this is one of the gates [and means] of gratitude.
8. Be grateful to the one who favours you and favour the one who is grateful to you, for indeed there is no end to favours when they are appreciated and there is no continuation for them when they are unappreciated.
9. Let the recompense for the blessing which has come upon you be the showing of goodness to one who wrongs you.
10. Be good neighbours to the blessings of religion and this world by showing gratitude to the one who guides you to them.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

11. Take advantage of gratitude, for the least of its benefits is increment [of blessings].
12. The best thing that spoken loudly [in order that others may hear] is the gratitude that is publicized.
13. The best gratitude for blessings is favoring others with them.
14. The most deserving of those to whom you do good is the one who does not disregard your good turn.
15. The most deserving of your gratitude is the one who does not prevent you from acquiring more.
16. The first thing that is incumbent upon you with regards to Allah, the Glorified, is being grateful for His blessings and seeking His pleasure.
17. The most effective thing that makes a blessing last longer is gratitude and the greatest thing by which tribulations are overcome is patience.
18. The most deserving of people for an increase in blessing is the most grateful of them for what he has been granted of it.
19. The most beloved of people to Allah, the Glorified, is the one who deals gratefully with the blessings that have been bestowed upon him and the most hated of them to Him is the one who deals ungratefully with His blessings.
20. No one acquires gratitude except by giving [generously] from his wealth.
21. Verily in every blessing there is a right of gratitude to Allah, the Most High, so whoever fulfils it, He increases it for him and whoever does not do so risks losing his blessing.
22. Verily the servant is [always] between blessing and sin, [and] nothing rectifies [or improves] them except repentance and gratitude.
23. Gratitude is [a means of] increment.
24. Gratitude is obligatory.
25. Gratitude is advantageous.
26. Gratitude causes blessings to flow forth abundantly.
27. Gratitude is an embellishment for blessing[s].
28. Gratitude is the fortress of blessings.
29. Showing [one's] affluence is from [the ways of showing] gratitude.
30. Gratitude is the interpreter of intention and the tongue of [one's inner] conscience.
31. Gratitude is the embellishment of comfort and the fortification of blessing.
32. Gratitude is obligatory upon the people of blessings.
33. If Allah bestows you with a blessing then show gratitude.
34. Verily it behooves those who have been protected [from sins] and have been favored with safety [from misdeeds] to take pity on sinners and other disobedient people; and to make the gratitude for their good state prevail over them and act as a barrier for them.
35. When you are given, show gratitude.
36. When you do good to others with a blessing [that you have been bestowed with], then you have shown gratitude for it.
37. When the edges of blessings reach you, then do not repel their peaks by lack of gratitude.
38. Through gratitude, blessing lasts.
39. Through gratitude, more is obtained.
40. The fruit of gratitude is increase in blessings.
41. Showing gratitude leads to increment.
42. The best gratitude is that which warrants increase.
43. Constant gratitude is the symbol of obtaining increment.
44. Increased gratitude and keeping ties with near relative's increases sustenance and prolongs [one's] life.
45. The cause of increment is gratitude.
46. Showing gratitude to your Lord is [done] through prolonged praise.
47. The gratitude of one who is above you is through true friendship and loyalty.
48. The gratitude of your equal is through good brotherhood.
49. The gratitude of one who is under you is through generous bestowal.
50. Showing gratitude for blessings is a protection from adversities.
51. Gratitude to the Almighty brings forth abundant blessings.
52. Showing gratitude for blessings results in its increase and leads to its renewal.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

53. Gratitude for blessing is a safeguard from its alteration and a guarantee of its sustenance.
54. The gratitude of a believer is manifested in his action.
55. The gratitude of a hypocrite does not surpass his tongue.
56. Gratitude for a past blessing results in the coming of renewed blessings.
57. Showing gratitude for blessings multiplies and increases them.
58. Showing gratitude for blessings leads to its increase and showing ingratitude for it is evidence of its reduction.
59. Gratitude for blessing is a safeguard from the coming of adversity.
60. The gratitude of a scholar for his knowledge is [in] his acting upon it and his sharing it with the one who deserves it.
61. Your gratitude to the one who is pleased with you increases [his] approval and loyalty (or preservation) towards you.
62. Your gratitude to the one who is angry with you leads to reconciliation and his having a favorable disposition towards you.
63. He ('a) said to a man whom he was congratulating for the birth of his son: You have occasion to be grateful to Allah, the Giver, and be blessed in the gift that you have been bestowed with. May he come of age and may you be blessed with his devotion.
64. He who praises his benefactor and mentions him with goodness [and appreciation] has shown gratitude for [his] kindness.
65. You must give thanks [both] in ease and adversity.
66. You must be constantly grateful and ever patient, for these two [qualities] increase blessing and remove tribulations.
67. In gratitude for blessings lies their continuity.
68. In gratitude there is increase.
69. Lack of gratitude removes the desire to do good deeds.
70. Bind the approaching blessings with gratitude, for not everything that escapes comes back.
71. Gratitude is sufficient for increase.
72. The guarantor of increase is gratitude.
73. Be occupied by gratitude for your good state and [your] safety from that which has afflicted others.
74. None is capable of fortifying blessings the way [showing] gratitude for them does.
75. If Allah, the Glorified, had not made a promise [to punish those who are disobedient], it would have still been obligatory not to disobey Him out of gratitude for His blessings.
76. One who shows gratitude deserves more.
77. Whoever shows gratitude, his blessing lasts [longer].
78. One whose gratitude increases, his blessings multiply.
79. One who is inspired to show gratitude will not be deprived of increase.
80. One who does not show gratitude for a blessing is punished by its cessation.
81. One who continues showing gratitude makes the goodness [and blessing] last.
82. One who is bestowed with a blessing and gives thanks for it is like the one who is tried with difficulties and bears them patiently.
83. One who shows gratitude for [and act of] kindness has indeed fulfilled its right.
84. When someone thanks you without [your having done him] a good turn, then do not consider yourself safe from his censure without any breach.
85. Whoever thanks the one who favours him has indeed recompensed him.
86. One who does not show gratitude for favours should be counted [as being] from the livestock [rather than being human].
87. One who shows gratitude without any favor, censures without any wrongdoing?
88. Whoever makes the effort to show concern for you, then make the effort to show him your gratitude?
89. One who guards (or mixes) blessings with gratitude is surrounded by more [blessings].
90. One who does not begird [his] blessings by being grateful for them has indeed exposed them to cessation.
91. Whoever thanks Allah, He increases [the blessings] for him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

92. One who feels grateful for blessings in his heart deserves increase [even] before he manifests [the gratitude] on his tongue.
93. One whose gratitude increases, his goodness [and blessing] increases.
94. One whose gratitude diminishes, his goodness [and blessing] comes to an end.
95. One who is granted a blessing has indeed been enslaved by it until he is freed by his show of gratitude for it.
96. One who thanks Allah, the Glorified, has to give thanks twice as it was He who enabled him to give thanks [in the first place] and that is the gratitude for being thankful.
97. One who shows gratitude to you for your kindness (or the kindness of someone else) has [actually] requested you [for something].
98. One who does not show gratitude for blessing is deprived of more [blessings].
99. Nothing fortifies blessings like gratitude.
100. Nothing shows gratitude for favors like bestowing them on others.
101. Allah, the Glorified, does not open the door of gratitude for anyone and then close the door of increase [in blessings].
102. With gratitude blessings last [longer].
103. Do not forget to show your gratitude when you receive blessings.
104. Be a thankful servant in times of ease and a patient servant in times of adversity.

Notes

1. As opposed to hiding one's wealth and pretending to be poor.

325. DOUBT AND MISGIVING

1. Doubt corrupts certitude and nullifies faith.
2. Be wary of doubt, for verily it corrupts religion and nullifies certitude.
3. The most destructive thing is doubt and uncertainty, and the most constructive thing is piety and keeping aloof from sin.
4. Doubt is misgiving.
5. Doubt [in the existence of God] is disbelief.
6. Doubt corrupts religion.
7. Doubt nullifies faith.
8. Doubt is the fruit of ignorance.
9. Doubt leads to polytheism.
10. Doubt puts out the light of the heart.
11. Indeed doubt was only named 'shubha' because it resembles the truth. As for the close friends of Allah, their illumination in it is [their] certitude and the direction of the right path is [itself] their guide; while the enemies of Allah are called towards it (doubt) by their misguidance and their guide is blindness.
12. The bane of certitude is doubt.
13. By continued doubt [in God], polytheism comes about.
14. The fruit of doubt is perplexity.
15. It is possible that conjecture may [turn out to] be correct.
16. The cause of perplexity is doubt.
17. I am amazed at the one who doubts in the power of Allah while he sees His creation!
18. Acting suspicious is a shame and having an eager desire to backbite is [a cause of entering] hellfire.
19. Everything that is devoid of certitude is [mere] conjecture and dubiety.
20. Every person has a [desire and a] need, so distance yourselves from suspicion.
21. A person will never go astray until his doubt overcomes his certainty.
22. One who falters increases his doubt.
23. One whose doubt increases, his religion gets corrupted.
24. One whose suspicion increase, his backbiting [also] increases.
25. The sincere one is not suspicious and the one who is certain does not doubt.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

26. He in whose heart doubt has settled does not believe in Allah.
27. Keeping away from suspicion is from the best magnanimity.
28. Who can be more of a failure than the one who crosses [over] from certainty towards doubt and perplexity?
29. The smallest doubt can corrupt certitude.
30. Nobody more timid than the suspicious one.
31. Suspicion leads to mistrust.
32. When suspicion appears, thoughts [about others] become negative.
33. Abandon that which causes you to doubt for that which does not cause you to doubt.
34. Let your inquiry into doubtful matters be conclusive, for indeed the one who falls into them becomes confounded.
35. The sceptic has no religion and the backbiter has no magnanimity.
36. The suspicious one is never found in a sound state.
37. The most abased of people is the sceptic.
38. The suspicious person is always sick.
39. The sceptic has no religion.
40. The doubting one has no certitude.

Notes

1. Or: Doing something that makes others suspicious...

326. COMPLAINING OF DISTRESS

1. Whoever complains of his distress to [anyone] other than a believer, it is as if he has complained against Allah, the Glorified.
2. Whoever complains of his distress to a believer, it is as if he has complained to Allah, the Glorified.

327. SCHADENFREUDE

1. One who is gleeful of the mistakes made by others, [then] others will be gleeful of his mistakes.

328. CONSULTATION AND DELIBERATION

1. Participating in deliberation leads to the appropriate decision.
2. Consult your enemies; you will know from their opinion how much enmity they have [for you] and what their objectives are.
3. Consult your intelligent enemy and be wary of the opinion of your ignorant friend.
4. Compare some opinions with others, from this the right course of action will come to light.
5. Suspect your intellects, for indeed it is from trusting in them that mistakes are made.
6. Consultation is [a means of] ease for you and a difficulty for others.
7. The best person whom you can consult is the one with [abundant] experience and the worst person whom you can associate with is the one with [numerous] faults.
8. Consultation is [a means of] seeking [assistance and] support.
9. Seeking advice is the essence [and source] of guidance.
10. The one who seeks advice is protected from failure.
11. The one who seeks advice is on the side of success.
12. Consultation elicits for you the correct opinions of others.
13. Indeed consultation has only been urged because the opinion of the adviser is unbiased while the opinion of the consulter is mixed with bias.
14. The bane of consultation is contradiction of opinions.
15. When you have decided [to do something], then consult [with others].
16. When you proceed with an affair then proceed after deliberation and seeking advice; do not delay your action of today to tomorrow, and perform each day's action on that same day.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

17. Ignorance of the adviser is [a cause of] destruction of the consuler.
18. It behooves the intelligent one to add the opinion of the intelligent people to his opinion and to merge the knowledge of the wise with his knowledge.
19. It behooves the intelligent one to continuously seek the right path and abandon obstinacy.
20. The best among those whom you consult are the people of wisdom and knowledge, and those who possess experience and judiciousness.
21. Betrayal of the one who submits [to you] and the one who consults [you] is from the most atrocious acts and the gravest wickedness, and leads to punishment in hellfire.
22. Consult before you decide and think before you proceed.
23. Consult the intelligent ones and you will be safe from error and regret.
24. Consult in your affairs those who fear Allah and you will be rightly guided.
25. Being unjust to the one who seeks advice is [the worst form of] oppression and betrayal.
26. You must seek consultation, for indeed it is the result of judiciousness.
27. It is the duty of the one who is consulted to strive in giving an [appropriate] opinion but it is not for him to guarantee success.
28. The essence [and source] of guidance is in consultation.
29. Consultation suffices as a supporter.
30. One who acts against [good] advice gets perplexed.
31. One who consults an intelligent person acquires [his objective].
32. One whose adviser goes astray, his planning is nullified.
33. Whoever gives sincere advice to the one who consults him, his planning becomes good.
34. Whoever cheats the one who consults him, his foresight is taken away.
35. One who consults the people of intellect is enlightened by the lights of the intellects.
36. One who consults the people of intellect and wisdom attains success and rightness.
37. One who consults with the people shares in their [combined] intellects.
38. One who consults the people of intellect and wisdom, gains success through prudence and aptness?
39. One who persists in consultation does not lack a praiser when the right result is achieved or an apologizer when a mistake is made.
40. One who seeks advice does not go astray.
41. Nothing derives an appropriate outcome like consultation.
42. Consulting the judicious person who is concerned for you is a [means of attaining] triumph.
43. Consulting the ignorant person who is concerned for you one is dangerous.
44. How good a support consultation is!
45. What a good backing [and support] consultation is!
46. Do not consult with your enemy and hide your information [from him].
47. Never consult with the ignorant in your affairs.
48. Do not belittle a noteworthy opinion [even] when it is brought to you by an inferior person.
49. Do not include a miser in your consultation as he will turn you away from the goal and frighten you with poverty.
50. Never include a coward in your consultation as he will weaken your resolve in the matter and [will] make a mountain out of a mole hill.
51. Do not consult the liar, for indeed he is like the mirage that makes the distant seem near and the near seem distant.
52. Never include a greedy person in your consultation as he will facilitate evil [deeds] and glamorize avarice for you.
53. The intelligent one never dispenses with consultation.
54. There is no backing [and support that is stronger and] more reliable than consultation.
55. One who becomes satisfied with his own intellect (or action) has gone astray.

329. EAGERNESS AND LONGING

1. Longing [for Allah and the Hereafter] is from the qualities of those who have certitude.
2. Longing [for Allah] is the intimate companion of the Gnostics.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. One who longs [for Allah] forgets [this world].
4. One who longs [for Allah] sets out [towards him] at nightfall.

330. LUST

1. Lust is one of the two causes of deviation.
2. Lustful desires are fatal illnesses, and the best cure for them is acquiring patience against them.
3. Lustful desires are the snares of Satan.
4. Overcome [your] lust, [and] your wisdom will be perfected.
5. Turn your back on lustful desires, for indeed they drive you to perform sinful acts and to fall upon evil deeds.
6. Lustful desires are fatal diseases, and the best cure for them is acquiring patience against them.
7. Beware of allowing lustful desires to dominate you, for indeed its immediate result is dispraised and future consequence is detrimental.
8. Beware of letting lustful desires overpower you hearts, for indeed its beginning is bondage and its end is destruction.
9. The beginning of lust is pleasure and its end is harm.
10. Lust entices.
11. Lustful desires are diseases.
12. Lustful desires are lethal.
13. Lust is spoliation [of intellect and faith].
14. Lust is the most harmful of enemies.
15. Lustful desires are lethal poisons.
16. Lustful desires enslave the ignorant.
17. Yielding to lust is the worst disease.
18. Verily if you are controlled by your lustful desires, they will cause you to leap into frivolity and error.
19. When lust tries to overcome you then defeat it by curtailing excesses.
20. By controlling [one's] lust, one becomes free of every flaw.
21. Abandoning lustful desires is the best worship and the most beautiful habit.
22. The sweetness of lust is made bitter by the shame of ignominy [and humiliation].
23. Repulsing lust is more effective in exterminating it while fulfilling it only makes it more intense.
24. Inhibiting lust and anger is the struggle of the noble ones.
25. Increased lust degrades magnanimity.
26. Being overpowered by lust is the cause of evil.
27. The flame of lust induces the impairment [and destruction] of the soul.
28. Counter lust with restraint.
29. Oppose lust as a rival would oppose his rival and fight it as an enemy would fight his enemy.
30. Obeying one's lust corrupts the faith.
31. Obedience to lust is destruction and disobedience to it is dominion.
32. He who turns away from the lustful desires of this world attains the Garden of Repose [in the Hereafter].
33. The slave to lust is lowlier than the slave of a human being.
34. The slave to lust is a prisoner who cannot be freed from his imprisonment.
35. The heart that is attached to lustful desires is unable to benefit from sincere exhortations.
36. Being overpowered by lust is the greatest destruction, and controlling it is the most honourable dominance.
37. Being overpowered by lust nullifies preservation [of oneself from sin] and leads to destruction.
38. Overcome [your] lust before it ferocity becomes strong, for verily if it becomes strong it will possess you and use you, and you will not be able to stand up against it.
39. The comrade of lustful desires is the prisoner of [their] consequences.
40. The associate of lust has a sick soul and a troubled mind.
41. Resist lust by subduing it and you will be victorious.
42. How many a lustful desire has prevented [one from attaining] a lofty status!

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

43. How can one who is not aided by [divine] protection refrain from lust?
44. A servant will never be destroyed until he prefers his lust over his religion.
45. There is no sin that is worse than following [one's] lust, so do not obey it as it will preoccupy you from [the remembrance of] Allah.
46. If you had abstained from lustful desires you would surely have been safe from tribulations.
47. Whoever overcomes his lust, his intellect becomes manifested.
48. Whoever is overcome by his lust, his soul will not be safe.
49. One who is patient in the face of his lust becomes complete in [his] magnanimity.
50. One who controls his lust is indeed pious.
51. One who kills his lust rejuvenates his magnanimity.
52. One whose lust increases, [the expense for] his provision becomes heavy.
53. One who overcomes his lust, protects his status.
54. Whoever hastens towards lustful desires, afflictions rush towards him.
55. One who is enticed by lustful desires permits his soul to be a target of calamities.
56. Whoever controls his lust, his magnanimity becomes complete and his end becomes good.
57. One who does not control his lust does not control his intellect.
58. One who has not remedied his lust by abandoning it is still sick.
59. Multiplication of sins stems from submission to lust.
60. One who is overcome by lust is more abased than one who is enslaved.
61. One who makes a habit of following [his] lustful desires is overwhelmed by afflictions, is associated with evils and has certainty about the permanence [of this world].
62. Do not exceed the limits in your lust and anger as they will degrade you.
63. There is no reason with lust.
64. Nothing corrupts God-wariness but the dominance of lust.
65. There is no trial [and temptation] greater than lust.
66. How good it would be for people not to desire that which they ought not to [crave for].

331. THE MARTYR

1. One who dies on his bed while he is cognizant of the rights of his Lord, His Prophet and the right of his household, has died a martyr and his reward rests with Allah, the Glorified. He is also eligible for the recompense of the good acts he intended to do, as his intention takes the place of drawing his sword [in battle]. Indeed, for everything there is a [limited] term that it cannot go beyond.
2. We ask Allah, the Glorified, for [our inclusion in] the ranks of the martyrs, the fellowship of the felicitous and the company of the Prophets and the virtuous ones.

332. TESTIMONY

1. And testimony [has been prescribed] as a means of overcoming denials.
2. One who gives false testimony for you will give a similar testimony against you.
3. There is no good in the testimony of the treacherous.

333. FAME AND RENOWN

1. Good renown is a fortification of power.
2. Love of fame is the cornerstone of every affliction.

334. GREY HAIR OF OLD AGE

1. The grey hair of old age is enough of a warner.
2. The grey hair of old age is enough of an announcer [of impending death].
3. Change your grey hair [by dyeing it] and do not resemble the Jews.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. When you're black [hair] becomes white, your best [part of life] has passed away.
5. Grey hair [of old age] is the last of the promises of annihilation.

335. THE FOLLOWERS (SHI'A)

1. Verily the People of Paradise will look at the stations of our followers just as a person among you looks at the celestial bodies in the sky.
2. Verily Allah, the Glorified, checked the earth and chose for us followers who would help us, would be gladdened by our joy and saddened by our sadness, and would spend from their persons and their possessions in our way - these are the ones who are from us and shall rejoin us [in the Hereafter].
3. Our follower is like the bee. If they knew what was in its abdomen, they would surely have eaten it.
4. Our follower is like the citron, its smell is fragrant and [both] its outward and inward are beautiful.

336. THE DISGRACE OF A MAN

1. Four things disgrace a man: miserliness, dishonesty, voraciousness and bad manners.

337. PATIENCE AND THE PATIENT

1. Patience is the first prerequisite of proficiency (or certitude).
2. Patience in times of hardship makes reward abundant.
3. Patience is one of the two triumphs.
4. Patience in the face of calamities makes one attain honourable ranks.
5. Patience in the obedience to Allah is easier than patience in the face of His chastisement.
6. Patience in affliction is better than wellbeing in [times of] comfort.
7. Patience is the best trait and knowledge is the most honourable embellishment and gift.
8. Patience is for a person to bear that which befalls him and to suppress [his anger with] that which enrages him.
9. Patience is of two types: enduring what you hate and abstaining from what you love.
10. Patience is the best vestment of faith and the most honourable of human qualities.
11. Refraining from lust is chastity, from anger is courage and from sin is piety.
12. Patience is of two types: Patience in affliction is pleasantly beautiful, but patience in refraining from the prohibited is even better.
13. Patience in poverty with dignity is better than wealth with indignity.
14. Patience in the face of agonizing distress leads to success in attaining opportunities.
15. Be patient [and] you will achieve.
16. Be patient [and] you will triumph.
17. Occupy yourself with patience in adversity instead of being distressed by it.
18. Be patient with the action which will surely bring you reward and refrain from the action the punishment for which you will not be able to bear.
19. Adopt patience, for indeed patience has a sweet end and an auspicious result.
20. Be patient with the bitterness of truth and beware of being deceived by the sweetness of falsehood.
21. Stick to the earth, be patient in trials, and do not move your hands and follow the fancy of your tongues [in order to start quarrels].
22. Espouse patience, for indeed it is the pillar of faith and the basis of affairs.
23. The best patience is longanimity.
24. The strongest resource for [facing] difficulties is patience.
25. The best patience is during the bitter pain of tragedy.
26. The best patience is abstaining from that which is loved [but prohibited].
27. The best asset is patience in difficulty.
28. The action with most praiseworthy results is patience.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

29. Verily patience is a virtue except if it is [when others are patient] concerning you, and apprehension is bad except if it is over you; verily the affliction [we suffer] by your loss is great whereas [the hardships] before you and after you are insignificant [in comparison].
30. Patience is a foundation [for other good actions].
31. Patience is an elevation; agitation is degradation.
32. Patience is a means of repelling [adversities].
33. Patience is a victory; haste [and impatience] is a danger.
34. Patience fights off mishaps.
35. Patience is the cornerstone of faith.
36. Patience is the shield against poverty.
37. Patience is the fruit of conviction.
38. Patience makes tragedy easier to bear.
39. Patience purges calamity.
40. Patience is the fruit of faith.
41. Patience is an asset for [facing] affliction.
42. Patience is the guarantor of success.
43. Patience is the symbol of [divine] succour.
44. Patience is more repelling for affliction[s].
45. Patience constrains the enemies.
46. Patience is the [best] resource for [tackling] poverty.
47. Patience is an aide in every affair.
48. Patience is the best of assets.
49. Patience is the strongest vestment.
50. Patience is a riding mount that does not stumble.
51. Patience is the most helpful thing in [facing the hardships of] one's lifetime.
52. Patience is the best of the believer's soldiers.
53. Judiciousness and excellence lie in patience.
54. Patience in the face of suffering leads to the gaining of opportunity.
55. Patience descends [in proportion to] to the extent of the hardship.
56. Patience in times of difficulty is from the best endowments.
57. Patience in hardship blunts the edge of the one who rejoices in your suffering.
58. Patience is more repelling for harm.
59. If Allah tests you with some hardship, then be patient.
60. If you are patient, then in [the reward of] Allah there is a restoration [and recompense] from every hardship.
61. If you are patient then things will transpire as ordained and you will be rewarded, and if you are agitated then things will transpire as ordained and you will bear the burden of sin.
62. Either be patient like the freemen or else seek distraction [and forget] like the inept.
63. If you are patient, you will attain the stations of the virtuous through your patience, and if you become agitated, then your agitation will cause you to enter the fire of hell.
64. Either be patient like the honourable ones or else seek distraction like the animals.
65. Verily you will never attain that which you love from your Lord except by refraining from that which you desire.
66. Verily if you are patient in affliction, thankful in comfort and satisfied with the [divine] decree, you will gain the pleasure of Allah, the Glorified.
67. When you are patient in adversity, you blunt its edge.
68. Through patience, adversity is made lighter.
69. Through patience, [one's legitimate] desires are realized.
70. Through patience, the loftiness of matters is attained.
71. Give glad tidings of success and victory to yourself when you are patient.
72. Dress yourself with patience and certainty, for these two are good provisions in [both] comfort and hardship.
73. The reward of patience takes away the sufferings of tribulation.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

74. The reward for patience is the loftiest reward.
75. Good patience is the vanguard of victory.
76. Good patience is the basis of every affair.
77. Good patience is an aide in every matter.
78. Persevering patience is the symbol of success and victory.
79. May Allah have mercy on the person who makes patience the conveyance of his life and piety the provision for his death.
80. The cornerstone of faith is patience.
81. Your patience in [times of] hardship lightens the adversity and brings abundant reward.
82. Your patience in bearing agonies gains you opportunities.
83. Bid yourselves to patiently perform acts of worship and protect yourselves from the impurity of evil deeds, [as a result] you will find the sweetness of faith.
84. Blessed is the one who makes patience the conveyance of his salvation and piety the provision of his death.
85. Per during patience is the quality of the virtuous.
86. Espouse patience in distress and tribulation.
87. Espouse patience and tolerance; for whoever espouses these two [qualities], adversities become easy for him [to bear].
88. Espouse patience, for indeed it is a protective fortress and the worship of those who possess certitude.
89. Espouse patience, for the intelligent one holds on to it and the ignorant one returns to it.
90. Espouse patience, for the judicious one holds on to it and the agitated one turns back to it.
91. It is during the first blow [of adversity] that the patience of the noble ones is seen.
92. During the descending of hardships and successive adversities, the excellence of patience becomes manifest.
93. In patience there is triumph.
94. In tribulation the excellence of patience is realized.
95. Sometimes patience becomes difficult [to come by].
96. It is seldom that one is patient yet he does not acquire [his objective].
97. It is seldom that one is patient yet he does not become powerful.
98. It is seldom that one is patient yet he does not gain victory.
99. How many a lock has been opened with patience!
100. One who is not patient in his toiling [for earning his livelihood] has to be patient in destitution.
101. The patient one is never deprived of victory, even if it takes a long time [to come].
102. None bears the bitterness of truth except the one who is certain of its sweet [and pleasing] aftermath.
103. The affair of the patient one returns to the realization of his goal and reaching his aspiration.
104. With patience, there is no adversity.
105. There is nothing that gives a more praiseworthy result, or a more delightful consequence, or is more repelling for bad etiquette, or more helpful in realizing what is sought, than patience.
106. One who is patient is victorious.
107. One who is patient attains his aspiration.
108. One who seeks relief from patience is relieved by it.
109. Have sweet patience during the bitter affair.
110. The guarantor of succour is patience.
111. For every afflicted one there is [a refuge in] patience.
112. Reward will never be acquired until [the bitter pill of] patience is swallowed.
113. One who seeks relief from patience will never be deprived of succor.
114. One who is patient in the obedience of Allah will be granted [something] better than what he was patient with, by Allah, the Glorified.
115. Whoever arms himself with the shield of patience, calamities become easy for him [to bear].
116. One who remains patient throughout the long harassment [of people] has demonstrated true piety.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

117. One who is patient in the trial of Allah, the Glorified, has fulfilled the right of Allah, has feared His chastisement and has hoped for His reward.
118. One who is patient honours himself, attains success with reward and obeys Allah, the Glorified.
119. One who clothes himself with patience and contentment gains power and nobility.
120. Whoever is patient in the obedience of Allah and refrains from His disobedience, then he is [indeed] a patient struggler.
121. One whose patience is prolonged, his breast becomes straitened.
122. One who sets foot upon the vessel of patience gains victory?
123. Patience during hardships is from the treasures of faith.
124. Patience in [times of] calamities is from the best judiciousness.
125. Patience during tribulation is one of the signs of good character.
126. He who is patient is not afflicted.
127. One who adopts patience does not fail.
128. Nothing obtains reward like patience does.
129. That which you abstain from is better than that which you delight in.
130. How good it is for a person to refrain from that which he desires!
131. Afflicted one, what has made you patiently bear your disease, and [what has] made you remain steadfast in the face of your hardships, and [what has] consoled you from weeping over yourself?
132. There is no stumbling with patience.
133. Discomforts are not repelled except by patience.
134. There is no aide better than patience.
135. Patience (or virtue) is not realized except by experiencing the pain of going against what one is accustomed to [and enjoys].
136. With patience, judiciousness is strengthened.
137. The bitterness of patience bears the [sweet] fruit of victory.
138. The bitterness of patience is removed by the sweetness of victory.
139. How good a supporter patience is!
140. How good a succor patience is during tribulation!
141. The one who wears the garment of piety and certitude is [truly] guided.
142. Do not make haste in that which Allah has not hastened for you.
143. There is no faith like patience.
144. Whoever is patient, his hardship becomes easy [to bear].
145. Whoever is patient, his torment is lightened.
146. One who is not saved by patience, is destroyed by agitation.
147. One who remains patient with the bitter harassment [of people] has demonstrated true piety.

Notes

1. Imam 'Ali ('a) said this at the burial of the Holy Prophet (s).

338. YOUNG CHILDREN

1. Teach your young children [how to perform the ritual] prayer and make them accountable for it when they reach puberty.

339. GOOD HEALTH AND THE HEALTHY

1. Good health is the more salubrious of the two delights.
2. Good health is the best blessing.
3. With good health, enjoyment becomes complete.
4. With good health, there is delight in the taste [of food].
5. The alms-tax of good health is striving in the obedience of Allah.
6. Are the people who are enjoying the vitality of good health awaiting anything other than the afflictions of illness?!

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Good health and gluttony do not go together.
8. Good health is not attained except through a good diet.

340. THE CHEST

1. The chest is the guard of the body.

341. CHARITIES

1. Charity is the greater of the two gains.
2. Charity is the better of the two reserves.
3. Charity brings down mercy.
4. Charity repels tribulation and calamity.
5. Verily you are more in need of spending [in charity] than which you earn than [you are of] earning that which you amass.
6. When you become penniless then do business with Allah through charity.
7. Through charity, death gets deferred.
8. The blessing of wealth is in charity.
9. Safeguard yourselves through charity.
10. The best charity is that which is given most secretly.
11. Foster your faith with charity.
12. Groom yourselves with piety and cure your sick with charity.
13. Charity given in secret expiates wrongdoings and charity given openly is a means of increasing wealth.
14. Charity given openly repels ill-fated death.
15. Give charity and you will be saved from the vileness of parsimony.
16. Expiate your sins and endear yourselves to your Lord through charity and keeping ties with your near relatives.
17. Charity is a treasure.
18. Charity protects one from falling into evil.
19. Charity is the best means of attaining closeness [to Allah].
20. Charity is the best of virtuous deeds.
21. Charity is a valuable treasure.
22. Charity given secretly is from the best righteous actions.
23. Charity protects.
24. Make your weights [of good deeds] heavy with charity.

342. TRUTHFULNESS

1. Truthfulness is the strongest column of faith.
2. Truthfulness is the pillar of Islam and the column of faith.
3. Truthfulness is the cornerstone of faith and the adornment of the human being.
4. Truthfulness is the beauty of a human being and the column of faith.
5. Be truthful and you will be successful.
6. Adopt truthfulness and trustworthiness for indeed these are the two traits of the righteous.
7. Espouse truthfulness even if you fear harm may come of it, for indeed this is better for you than the lying from which benefit is expected.
8. Seek benefit from truthfulness in every situation and you will gain; keep away from evil and dishonesty, and you will remain safe.
9. Be truthful in your words, be sincere in your actions and purify yourselves with piety.
10. The most sublime thing is truthfulness.
11. The best honesty is fulfilling your promises.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

12. The best honesty is fulfilling your promise and the best generosity is exerting yourself [in helping others].
13. Truthfulness is a means [of attaining success].
14. Truthfulness is trustworthiness; dishonesty is a betrayal.
15. Truthfulness saves [one from hardship].
16. Honesty is a merit; dishonesty is a vice.
17. Honesty is [a means to] success; dishonesty is a cause of disgrace.
18. Truthfulness is an elevation.
19. Honesty is the trust of the tongue.
20. Truthfulness is the brother of justice.
21. Honesty is the language of truth.
22. Truth is the best speech.
23. Truthfulness is the life of God-wariness.
24. Truth is the soul of speech.
25. Truthfulness is the garb of religion.
26. Truthfulness is the garb of certitude (or of the God-wary).
27. Truthfulness is the cornerstone of religion.
28. Truthfulness is a refuge and an honour.
29. Truthfulness is the most successful evidence.
30. Salvation is with the truth.
31. Honesty is the manifested truth.
32. Truth is the noblest (or the best) narration.
33. Honesty is the garb (or the language) of truth.
34. Truth is the best foundation (or the best informer).
35. Truthfulness is the perfection of nobility.
36. Truth is the uprightness of everything.
37. Truthfulness is the most honourable characteristic of one who has conviction.
38. Truthfulness is the best asset.
39. Truthfulness is the trust of the tongue and the ornament of faith.
40. Truthfulness is the correspondence of speech with divine dispensation.
41. Through truthfulness, salvation is attained.
42. Through truthfulness, magnanimity becomes complete.
43. By truthfulness, words become adorned.
44. By honesty and loyalty, magnanimity becomes complete for its possessor.
45. The cornerstone of faith is truthfulness.
46. Two things are the basis of religion: honesty and certainty.
47. The truthfulness of a man is to the extent of his magnanimity.
48. Adopt truthfulness, for it is the best foundation.
49. Adopt truthfulness, for whoever is truthful in his speech, his status is elevated.
50. The end result of truthfulness is salvation and security..
51. Truthfulness has diminished among the people and dishonesty has become abundant; love is been expressed by [people with their] tongue while they hate each other with their hearts.
52. For everything there is an adornment and the adornment of speech is truthfulness.
53. For [the speaker of] truth there is benefit.
54. Let the most trustworthy of people in your estimation be the one who is most truthful in his speech.
55. Let your recourse be to the truth, for indeed truth is the best companion.
56. If things were to be differentiated from each other, honesty would be with courage and cowardice would be with dishonesty.
57. A goodly mention is better for a person than the wealth that he bequeaths to the one who does not praise him.
58. One who speaks the truth becomes successful.
59. Whoever is known for his truthfulness, his lies are [also] accepted.
60. Whoever turns aside from truth, his path becomes narrow.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

61. One whose speech is truthful, his loftiness is increased.
62. How truthful is a person's testimony against himself and what witness is there against him better than his own deeds?! A man is not recognized except by his knowledge, just as a strange tree is not known except when it bears fruit, thus the fruits are evidence of its origins. The excellence of every person is known by his merit, and thus the honourable one is distinguished by his morals and the vile one is disgraced by his wickedness.
63. Do not tell the truth to one who responds to your truth by denying [and belying] it.
64. There is no interpreter clearer than the truth.
65. There is no report better than the truth.
66. There is no way that is more rescuing than the truth.
67. He who argues with [the support of] truth is not defeated.
68. Truth is the best narration.
69. The truth saves you, even if you fear it.
70. The least of things [required for salvation] is truthfulness and trustworthiness.

Notes

1. Or in another reading: Do not believe the one who responds to your truth by his denial.

343. THE TRUTHFUL

1. Verily the truthful one is honoured and dignified, and indeed the liar is abased and humiliated.
2. The truthful one is honoured and dignified.
3. The truthful one is on the highest rank of salvation and honour.
4. Many a truthful one who informs you about [a matter of] this world may be deemed a liar by you.
5. Be truthful and you will become loyal.
6. One who is truthful improves his religiousness.
7. One who is always truthful will not be deprived of honour.
8. One whose language is truthful, his proof becomes strong.
9. One whose language is truthful, his proof is correct.
10. One who is truthful is saved.
11. The truthful one achieves with his honesty what the liar cannot achieve with his deception.
12. The truthful one earns three things with his honesty: the virtue of being considered reliable, becoming beloved and being revered.

344. CHANGE OF CIRCUMSTANCES

1. It is during the change of circumstances that the [real] gems among the people are known.

345. THE RIGID

1. The rigid [and difficult person or issue] may become soft.

346. WELFARE OF THE BELIEVERS

1. Devote yourself to [working for] the welfare of the believers and pious ones.
2. How far is probity from the people of evil and impudence!

347. BEING DUTIFUL WITH ALLAH

1. One who is dutiful with Allah, the Glorified, does not spoil [his relationship] with anyone.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

348. REFORMING THE PEOPLE

1. If your zeal for reforming the people becomes heightened, then begin with yourself; for indeed your pursuit for the righteousness of others while you are [yourself] corrupt, is the greatest flaw.
2. I am amazed at the one who sets out to reform the people while his own soul is more severely corrupted yet he does not reform it and pursues the reformation of others.
3. How can one who does not reform himself reform others?!
4. Rectify when you have corrupted and complete [your good act] when you have done good.

349. VAINGLORY

1. The worst disease is vainglory.
2. Many a [show of ostentation and] vainglory brings about loss.

350. PRAYER AND ONE WHO STANDS FOR PRAYER

1. Prayer is the better of the two means of [attaining] nearness [to Allah].
2. Prayer is a fortress [that protects] from the influences of Satan.
3. Prayer is the fortress of the all-Merciful and the instrument for expelling Satan.
4. Prayer causes [divine] mercy to descend.
5. When one of you stands to perform prayer, then let him pray the prayer of one who is bidding farewell (i.e. he should assume that it is the last prayer he will perform in his lifetime).
6. And prayer [was prescribed] as a purification from arrogance.
7. How many of those who stand [to perform prayer] have nothing in their prayer but [physical] effort.
8. If the one who offers prayer knew how much divine mercy is descending upon him, he would surely not raise his head from prostration.
9. I am not worried by a wrongdoing in which I am given time so that I can offer two units of prayer [and seek forgiveness].

351. SILENCE

10. Silence covers you with dignity and suffices as your provision for seeking pardon.
11. Be silent and you will remain safe.
12. Espouse silence and your thoughts will remain hidden (or will become illuminated).
13. Remain silent in your lifetime and your affair will become lofty.
14. Espouse silence, for the least of its benefits is safety.
15. Espouse silence and you will be accompanied by safety and security; espouse contentment and you will be accompanied by prosperity and honour.
16. Espouse silence and be patient with contentment for the little provision [that you have], [and as a result] you will become great (or your will overcome) in your world and will become great in your Hereafter.
17. The best silence is that which prevents [one] from error.
18. Remaining silent when speech is inappropriate is more praiseworthy than eloquence.
19. Silence is dignity and idle talk is disgrace.
20. Silence is a means of deliverance.
21. Silence is the garden of contemplation.
22. Silence is the sign of forbearance [and judiciousness].
23. Silence is dignity and safety.
24. Silence without contemplation is dumbness.
25. Silence is the sign of nobility and the fruit of intelligence.
26. Silence is the adornment of knowledge and the symbol of forbearance [and judiciousness].
27. If there is eloquence in speech, then in silence there is safety from blunder.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

28. Only the one who is capable of giving a reply [but does not do so] can be called 'silent'; otherwise 'inarticulate' is more appropriate a description.
29. When you speak a word, it controls you but when you withhold it, you control it.
30. Through silence, reverence increases.
31. Sometimes silence is more eloquent than speech.
32. The cause of safety is silence.
33. Silence that results in your safety is better than speech that results in your reproach.
34. Silence that covers you with honour is better than speech that earns you regret.
35. Silence that earns you reverence is better than words that drape you with disgrace.
36. Silence, the result of which is praised, is better than speech whose consequence is dispraised.
37. Your remaining silent until you are requested to speak is better than your speaking until you are requested to become silent.
38. The silence of the ignorant person is his covering.
39. Blessed is the one who remains silent except from the remembrance of Allah.
40. Cling to silence, for it keeps you safe and saves you from regret.
41. The veil of wrongdoing is silence.
42. Increased silence earns you reverence.
43. Be a person of much silence without being inarticulate, for indeed silence is the embellishment of the scholar and the cloak [that hides the ignorance] of the ignorant.
44. One who maintains silence is safe from reproach.
45. One who maintains silence is safe from aversion [and hatred of others].
46. Whoever restrains himself from excessive speech, the people bear witness to his intelligence.
47. One who remains silent is safe.
48. How good a companion of forbearance silence is!
49. There is no forbearance like silence.
50. There is no worship like silence.
51. There is no reverence like silence.
52. There is no guardian that is more protective than silence.
53. There is no treasurer [and protector of secrets] better than silence.
54. There is no benefit in remaining silent from wisdom just as there is no good in speaking falsehood.
55. There is no good in remaining silent from the truth just as there is no benefit in speech with ignorance.
56. One who remains safe by being silent is like the one who derives benefit by speaking.

352. HARDSHIPS

1. The severest of hardships is [having] evil offspring.
2. Hardships are the key to reward.
3. Reward with Allah, the Glorified, is to the extent of the hardship undergone.
4. The hardship of [lacking] patience is the greatest of hardships.
5. Hardships are divided equally among the creatures.
6. Hardship in religion is the greatest of hardships.
7. The reward for [bearing] hardship is greater than the extent of the hardship [itself].
8. Indeed you are the target of calamities and the object of sicknesses.
9. At times, tribulation may abase [a person].
10. When you see that Allah, the Glorified, is continuously testing you [with hardships], then [know that] He has woken you [from your slumber of negligence].
11. When hardships distance themselves, solace draws near.
12. When you see your Lord continually testing you [with hardships] then be grateful to Him.
13. When you fear the difficulty of an affair then be firm against it, it will yield to you; and deceive time about its calamities, it will become easy for you.
14. When tribulations come to you then sit and accept them, for indeed your standing up and confronting them will only aggravate them.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

15. When adversity takes you by surprise, then seek refuge in patience and in seeking assistance [from Allah].
16. Through discomforts, Paradise is attained.
17. Through calamities, happiness is spoiled.
18. The harm that one faces in calamity is to the extent of [the loftiness of] one's rank.
19. It is with great difficulty that lofty ranks and perpetual bliss are attained.
20. The trial of a man is proportionate to his faith and religion.
21. The tribulation of a man is in his submission to avarice and [false] and hope.
22. Reward descends in proportion to the hardship [that one bears].
23. Three things are from the greatest tribulations: a very large family, an overwhelming loan and unrelenting sickness.
24. The reward for hardship is proportionate to the patience exhibited in it.
25. Continual strife is from the greatest tribulations.
26. Sometimes you may be the cause of your own misfortune.
27. To the extent of the hardship, there is reward.
28. Every time the value of a thing that is competed becomes great, the difficulty of losing it increases.
29. One who does not prepare himself to confront hardships [with patience and supplication], the hardships befall him [while he is unprepared for them].
30. One who starts complaining about the hardship that has befallen him is actually only complaining against his Lord.
31. One who turns his attention away from this world, hardships become easy for him [to bear].
32. One who hits his hand on his thigh in times of hardship has nullified his reward.
33. One who exaggerates small hardships, Allah tries him with great ones.
34. One who faces successive calamities acquires the merit of patience through them.
35. One of the greatest hardships for the virtuous is having to socialize with the wicked.
36. How great is the hardship in this world when accompanied by the severe indigence of tomorrow (i.e. the Hereafter)!
37. A hardship that befalls others and has reward for you is better than the hardship that befalls you while its reward and recompense is for others.
38. A hardship from which good is expected is better than a blessing for which gratitude is not expressed.
39. Be happy with tribulation and pleased with affliction [as you will gain great reward for it].
40. The worst of adversities are those in which there is no reckoning [and recompense].
41. Verily great reward accompanies great trials; so when Allah, the Glorified, loves a community, He tries them.
42. The one who exposes himself to affliction puts himself in danger.
43. Tribulation follows behind ease [and comfort].
44. Many a person is shown sympathy for an affliction that is [actually] his cure.
45. Many a person who is afflicted is made stronger by his affliction.
46. The distress of tribulation [one faces] is proportionate to the blessings [one receives].
47. Tribulation may come suddenly.
48. Every tribulation other than the fire [of hell] is [a means to] wellbeing.
49. For every heart there is anguish.
50. When you are tested, be patient.
51. How many a person is tested with blessings!
52. How many a person is blessed through tribulation!
53. Do not consider yourself secure from tribulation in your times of safety and comfort.

353. THE ONE WHO HITS THE MARK AND THE ONE WHO ERRS

1. The one who hits the mark, achieves and the one who errs, loses.
2. Being right is [a means of] safety, erring is [a cause of] reproach and haste is [a reason for] regret.
3. To everyone who shoots hits the mark.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

354. CORRECTNESS

1. Correctness is [performing] the most appropriate action.
2. Correctness is one of the branches of deliberation.
3. Increased correctness points to abundant intelligence.
4. One who strives for correctness becomes successful.
5. When the answer is overcomplicated, correctness is negated.

355. COUNTENANCE

1. good countenance is the beginning of felicity.
2. A good countenance is an apparent beauty.
3. A beautiful countenance is the first of the two felicities.

356. FASTING

1. Fasting is one of the two means to good health.
2. Fasting on the 'luminous days' (i.e. on the 13th, 14th and 15th) of every [lunar] month raises the stations and magnifies the rewards.
3. Fasting of the heart from thinking about sins is better than fasting of the stomach from food.
4. Fasting of the soul from the pleasures of this world is the most beneficial fasting.
5. Fasting of the body means restraining oneself from food willfully and by choice, out of fear of punishment and out of desire for reward and recompense.
6. Fasting of the soul means restraining the five senses from all the sins and emptying the heart of all the motives of evil.
7. Fasting of the heart is better than fasting of the tongue, and fasting of the tongue is better than fasting of the stomach.
8. And fasting [has been prescribed] as a test of the sincerity of the people.
9. How many of those who are fasting gain nothing from their fast but thirst!

357. GIVING EXAMPLES AND USING METAPHORS

1. In order to derive lessons, examples are given.
2. For people who take lesson, examples are given.
3. For people of understanding speech becomes figurative.
4. Metaphors are given for the people of intellect and insight.

358. LAUGHTER

1. The best [form of] laughter is a smile.
2. The excessive laughter of a man corrupts his dignity.
3. Excessive laughter alienates the companion and disgraces the leader.
4. One whose laughter increases, his reverence decreases.
5. One whose laughter increases, his heart dies.
6. One whose laughs excessively is regarded as being low.
7. Do not show your teeth [in laughter] while you have done such shameful deeds.
8. Never laugh too much such that your reverence is lost; and do not joke [too much] thereby [resulting in your] being taken lightly.

359. SUFFERING

1. Sometimes suffering may last [for long].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. One who discloses his suffering to the people torments himself.

360. NECESSITIES

1. The necessities of [dire] conditions lower the necks of men.
2. The necessities of [dire] conditions take one towards embarking on terrible deeds.
3. The plight of poverty impels one towards a despicable affair.

Notes

1. Meaning it causes them to get humiliated.

361. WEAKNESS

1. When you become weak, then be weak in the disobedience of Allah.
2. Be from among those who are neither overcome by violence nor affected by weakness.

362. ERROR AND DEVIATION

1. The most destructive thing is persistent deviation.
2. How many a deviation has been embellished by a verse from the Book of Allah just as a bronze dirham is embellished by a coat of silver.
3. It is enough of an error for a person to command others to do what he does not do [himself] and forbids them from that which he does not refrain from.
4. For every deviation there is a cause.
5. What is there after truth except error?

363. INNER CONSCIENCES

1. Healthy consciences are more truthful witnesses than eloquent tongues.
2. The soundness of consciences is from the best provisions.
3. When sincerity is achieved the consciences are illuminated.

364. HOSPITALITY

1. Honor your guest even if he is ignoble; and stand up from your sitting place for your father and your teacher, even if you are a ruler.
2. Hospitality is the cornerstone of magnanimity.

365. AGONY

1. For every agony there is a way out.
2. No agony intensifies but that Allah brings its relief closer.

366. JUBILATION

1. Many a time jubilation turns into rage.

367. THE WAY AND THE COURSE

1. Blessed is the one who embarks on the way of the honorable and sticks to the highway of illumination [and truth]; and [one who] is infatuated with the Hereafter and turns away from this world.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Indeed, the highway of truth has been made manifest for those who seek it.
3. They have indeed been given time to seek deliverance and have been guided to the clear course.
4. One who deviates from the clear tracks ends up following the courses of destruction.
5. One who slips from the highway of the course falls into the perplexity of narrowness.
6. One who deviates from the clear highway drowns in the depths of the sea.
7. Hold back from [traversing] a path when you fear its deviation.
8. Adopt the way of steadfastness, for indeed it will earn you honour and save you from reproach.
9. Take to the highway of illumination [and truth] and follow it, otherwise Allah will replace you with others.
10. Whoever deviates from the truth, good becomes evil for him and evil becomes good, and he gets intoxicated with the intoxication of misguidance.
11. Do not permit your selves to take you into the paths of the oppressors.

368. FOOD AND SUSTENANCE

1. Food is eaten and shared with three groups [in three situations]: alongside brothers with happiness, alongside the poor with selflessness and alongside the children of this world with magnanimity.
2. How bad a food the forbidden [food] is!
3. How bad a sustenance consuming the wealth of orphans is!
4. Few are those who increase their consumption of food and don't fall ill [because of it].
5. Seldom does one increase his consumption of excess foods without getting afflicted by sicknesses.
6. Eating less food is more honorable for the soul and makes good health last longer.
7. Eat citron before food and after it as the progeny of Muhammad (s) do this.
8. Whoever eats less, his aches [and ailments] are reduced.
9. Whoever consumes less, [the burden of] his sustenance is lightened.
10. One who sows in himself the love of different types of food, reaps the fruit of a variety of maladies.
11. Decrease your [consumption of] food and your ailments will reduce.

369. FEEDING OTHERS

1. When you feed [someone] then satiate him.
2. That which you have eaten has gone, but what you have fed to others spreads [like a pleasant fragrance].

370. CRITICISM

1. Beware of being critical of the people while going easy on yourself, thereby rendering your sin grave and being deprived of reward.

371. OBEDIENCE AND COMPLIANCE

1. Obey [Allah] and you will benefit.
2. Obey [Allah] and you will gain.
3. Obey Allah in all you affairs, for indeed obedience to Allah is superior to everything; and espouse piety.
4. Obey Allah, the Glorified, in every situation, and do not empty your heart of His fear and His hope even for a split second, and always seek forgiveness [from Him].
5. Obey the one who is above you and the one who is under you will obey you; rectify your inner self and Allah will rectify your outer state.
6. Obey Allah in accordance with what His Prophets have commanded you.
7. Respond to the calls of the Prophets of Allah and submit yourselves to their commands and be obedient to them, [as a result] you will be included in their intercession.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

8. Beware of being missed by your Lord in His worship, or being seen by Him in His disobedience thereby making Him displeased with you.
9. Achievement of goodness is through maintaining obedience.
10. Obedience and virtuous actions are the two profitable trades.
11. The best [act of] obedience is turning away from [worldly] pleasures.
12. The best [act of] obedience is renunciation of worldly pleasures.
13. The one who is the most sincere well-wisher for himself is he who is most obedient to his Lord.
14. The best obedience is relinquishing the [worldly] pleasures.
15. The most beloved of servants to Allah is the most obedient of them to Him.
16. The most deserving of Allah's mercy among the people are those who are most steadfast in His obedience.
17. The most deserving of obedience is one from whom you cannot find any escape and the one whom you cannot turn down.
18. The most deserving of [obedience from] those whom you obey is the one who orders you to [maintain] piety and forbids you from [following] vain desires.
19. Verily the true friend of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his progeny, is one who obeys Allah even if his close relatives distance themselves from him [because of it].
20. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has made obedience an advantage for the sagacious when the incapable ones fall short.
21. Obedience saves and disobedience destroys.
22. Obedience is compliance.
23. Obedience is the most protective of accoutrements.
24. Obedience is the prize (or endeavor) of the sagacious.
25. Obedience [to Allah] is a profitable trade.
26. Obedience is the longest lasting prestige.
27. Obedience is the prestige of the underprivileged.
28. Obedience brings forth [divine] reward.
29. Obedience is a mark of respect to the Imamate.
30. Obedience extinguishes the anger of the Lord.
31. He who adorns himself with obedience possesses honour.
32. Obedience to Allah is the strongest means [of attaining success in both worlds].
33. Obedience is the most protective (or most reliable) safeguard.
34. Verily I do not urge you to any obedience but that I practice it before you, and I do not forbid you from any disobedience except that I desist from it before you.
35. Verily if you obey Allah, He will save you and make your [final] abode good.
36. When acts of obedience diminish, wrongdoings increase.
37. Through obedience one draws nearer [to Allah].
38. Through obedience there is success.
39. By obedience Paradise is brought closer for the pious.
40. By [their] virtuous obedience, the righteous ones are known.
41. Seek intercession through the obedience of Allah and you will succeed.
42. Hold on to the obedience of Allah and He will bring your nearer [to Himself].
43. The fruit of obedience is Paradise.
44. The reward of Allah is for those who obey Him and His punishment is for those who disobey Him.
45. Devote yourself assiduously to obedience and rush towards performing righteous deeds, keep away from evil acts and make haste towards good acts, and keep away from doing what is forbidden.
46. Stop following [the path of] aggression and obduracy, and follow the path of obedience and submission [to Allah], [by this] you will be happy in the Hereafter.
47. Whoever embarks on [the ship of] obedience [to Allah], his port of call is Paradise.
48. Rush towards acts of obedience and race towards doing righteous actions, but if you fall short, then be careful not to fall short in performing that which is obligatory.
49. Blessed is the one who observes obedience to his Lord.
50. Blessed is the one who follows praiseworthy piety and opposes dispraised vain desires.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

51. Blessed is he who follows the course of peace by the sight of the one who shows him the way and by obeying the guide who instructs him.
52. Blessed is the one who is successful in his obedience [to Allah], has a good character and safeguards the affair of his Hereafter.
53. Obedience to Allah, the Glorified, is not attained except by the one who strives [for it] and spares no effort [in attaining it].
54. Obedience to Allah is the key to [every] right action and the rectification of [every] corruption (or of the Hereafter).
55. Obedience to Allah, the Glorified, is the highest pillar and the strongest accoutrement.
56. The shade of Allah, the Glorified, in the Hereafter is spread out for the one who obeys Him in this world.
57. You must obey the One whom you cannot be excused for being ignorant about.
58. You must show obedience to Allah, the Glorified, for indeed obedience to Allah is superior to everything.
59. You must obey the one who commands you to religion [and the obedience of Allah] for verily he is guiding you and saving you [from chastisement in the Hereafter].
60. Obedience is proportionate to [one's] intellect.
61. In obedience [to Allah] there are treasures of benefit.
62. The excellence of obedience makes one attain lofty stations.
63. And obedience [to the Imam was made obligatory] as a respect for the Imamate.
64. If Allah, the Glorified, had not given incentives for His worship, it would have still been obligatory to worship Him out of hope for His mercy.
65. One who obeys Allah, has sought [His] assistance (or has seen the truth).
66. Whoever seeks closeness to Allah through obedience, He grants him good gifts.
67. One who follows the path of obedience to Allah attains something greater [than what he would get by following other paths].
68. Whoever takes the obedience of Allah as his merchandise, profits come to him without any trade.
69. One who does not commence with sincere intention in his obedience [and worship] is not successful in gaining rewards.
70. One whose obedience increases, his honor increases.
71. From the best of deeds is acquiring [and performing] acts of obedience [and worship].
72. No adorning can adorn himself with anything better than obedience to Allah.
73. No commandment of Allah, the Glorified, that must be obeyed, comes but that it seems unpleasant [to the carnal soul].
74. Espousing obedience [to Allah] is the best accoutrement [for the Hereafter].
75. How good a means [of attaining closeness to Allah] obedience is!
76. He who has been granted success in obeying [and worshipping Allah] has [truly] gained success.
77. Guided is the one who obeys his Lord and fears his sins.
78. Protect yourselves from the chastisement of Allah by hastening towards obedience to Allah.
79. Do not apologize for an affair in which you have obeyed Allah, the Glorified, for this suffices as a [commendable] virtue.
80. There is no honour like obedience [to Allah].
81. There is no obedience to the creation in disobedience to the Creator.
82. Every obedient one is honoured.
83. Be obedient to Allah, the Glorified, and delight in His remembrance, and when you are in a state of turning away from Him, picture Him approaching you. He is calling you to His forgiveness and covering you with His kindness.
84. One who obeys his Lord gains authority.
85. One who obeys his Lord gains success.
86. Whoever obeys Allah, his affair becomes lofty.
87. Whoever obeys Allah, his affair becomes elevated.
88. One who obeys Allah will never become wretched.
89. One who obeys Allah, the Glorified, becomes powerful and strong.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

90. Whoever obeys Allah, the Glorified, his support becomes powerful.
91. One who obeys Allah, the Glorified, is not harmed by the resentful from among the people.
92. Whoever obeys Allah, He chooses him [to be among those who are close to Him].

Notes

1. Meaning that one must never obey anyone if it leads to disobeying Allah.

372. OBEYING COMMANDMENTS

1. One who obeys your command has exalted your status.

373. THE TYRANT

1. How quick is the downfall of a tyrant!

374. THE SEEKER

1. A seeker may fail [to achieve what he seeks].
2. Every seeker is [himself] sought [by death].
3. Every seeker other than Allah is sought.
4. How many a seeker is deprived while the one who does not seek is granted [sustenance].
5. For the seeker who achieves what he seeks, there is delight in [his] accomplishment.
6. Not every seeker is granted [sustenance].
7. Whoever seeks a thing achieves it, or part of it.
8. Whoever seeks that which is in the possession of people, they debase him [for it].
9. One who seeks that which is impossible loses his quest.
10. Not every seeker fails.

375. MATTERS THAT ARE PURSUED

1. At times the matters that are pursued are regarded with displeasure.
2. Sometimes the matter that is pursued and [its] acquisition become difficult.

376. THE SOUGHT AFTER

1. At times that which is sought after is attained.

377. COVETOUSNESS

1. Abasement, disgrace and wretchedness are in covetousness and greed.
2. Covetousness makes one enter [into difficulties and humiliation] but does not make him return from it; and it gives a guarantee but does not fulfil it.
3. The most destructive thing is covetousness.
4. The most harmful thing is covetousness.
5. The ugliest of traits is covetousness.
6. The worst thing is covetousness.
7. The root of avarice is covetousness and its fruit is reproach.
8. He who covers himself with covetousness has degraded himself.
9. The places where intellects become most deficient are under the flashes of greed.
10. Covetousness is harmful.
11. Covetousness is an affliction.
12. Covetousness is bondage.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

13. Covetousness is indigence.
14. Covetousness humiliates while piety exalts.
15. Covetousness is the beginning of evil.
16. Covetousness is a besieging (or and evident) indigence.
17. Covetousness is a present humiliation.
18. With covetousness comes humiliation.
19. Coveted objects humiliate men.
20. Covetousness is endless bondage.
21. Covetousness debases the commander.
22. If you give in to covetousness, it will destroy you.
23. Through avidities the necks of men are lowered [in humiliation].
24. How bad a companion of religion covetousness is!
25. The fruit of covetousness is wretchedness.
26. The fruit of covetousness is humiliation in this world and the Hereafter.
27. Abandon covetousness and greediness and cling to chastity and piety.
28. The abasement of men is in the things they covet and the passing away of lifetimes is in [following] the deceptions of [false] hopes.
29. The cornerstone of piety is abandoning covetousness.
30. Sometimes there is a false ambition for an unseen (or lost) hope.
31. Embarking on avidities cuts off the necks of men.
32. The cause of corruption of certitude is covetousness.
33. The cause of corruption of piety is covetousness.
34. Oppose covetousness with piety.
35. The servant of the coveted is enslaved and never gains his freedom.
36. He who instils covetousness in his soul has deceived it.
37. The corruption of religion is [caused by] covetousness.
38. Covetousness has been paired with humiliation.
39. One who trades covetousness for loss of hope [and desire for what others possess], the people will not treat him with contempt.
40. How good an aide of hope ambition is!
41. The trouble for religion is covetousness and its rectitude is [in] piety.
42. We seek Allah's protection from lowly coveted things and the ambitions that are disliked [by Him].
43. Do not covet that which you do not deserve.
44. Never let covetousness enslave you and be averse [to the pleasures of this world].
45. Never let yourself covet that which is above your needs thereby letting it overcome you with the desire for more.
46. Do not let covetousness enslave you while Allah has made you free.
47. Nothing corrupts religion like covetousness.
48. There is no quality more abased than covetousness.
49. There is no humiliation greater than covetousness.
50. A little covetousness corrupts a lot of piety.
51. Cupidity corrupts piety and licentiousness [corrupts] God-wariness.
52. Freedom from the captivity of covetousness is [gained] by acquiring loss of hope [in people].
53. Covetousness is one of the two abasements.
54. One who clings to covetousness is deprived of piety.
55. Whoever takes covetousness as his attire, it makes him swallow failure repeatedly.
56. One who entertains the hope of [fulfilment of] false cupidity, the grant [which he receives] belies him.
57. One who does not purify his soul from the lowliness of the coveted has actually abased himself and shall be even more abased and disgraced in the Hereafter.
58. A little cupidity corrupts a lot of piety.
59. Excessive covetousness is the symbol of lack of piety.
60. One who is possessed by covetousness is humiliated.
61. One who clings to covetousness is deprived of piety.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

62. One whose covetousness increases, his downfall becomes greater.
63. Every coveter is a prisoner [of his desires].
64. How many a coveter covets pardon.
65. One who covets becomes abased and undergoes hardship.
66. There is none more abased than a coveter.
67. The most indigent of people is the coveter.
68. The most humiliated of all people is the greedy, suspicious, coveter.
69. The coveter is forever abased.
70. The coveter is forever in the shackles of disgrace.

378. HAUGHTINESS

1. Whoever is haughty with his brothers, nobody will be sincere with him.
2. Whoever is haughty with people because of his authority, his authority will get stripped away.
3. Haughtiness is the language of error and ignorance.
4. Do not be haughty with the one whom you have not enslaved.

Notes

1. Meaning that one should not be haughty with those who are not his slaves.

379. INNERMOST THOUGHTS

1. One of the [great] tribulations is [having] evil inner thoughts.

380. FRIVOLITY

1. Frivolity [and heedlessness] makes life bitter.

381. VICTORY

1. Victory is [attained] by prudence, and prudence comes through experience.
2. The sweetness of victory effaces the bitterness of patience.
3. The alms-tax of victory is benevolence.
4. He who has been vanquished by sin has not gained victory.
5. The key to victory is remaining patient.
6. Never become vain because of [your] victory, for indeed you are not safe from the victory of time over you.
7. There is no victory for the one who has no patience.
8. Victory is the intercessor of the guilty.

382. INJUSTICE AND OPPRESSION

1. In times of injustice, remember the justice of Allah with you and when you are powerful, [recall] the power of Allah over you.
2. Beware of oppression, for verily it brings [divine] retribution, dispels blessings and causes changes in circumstances.
3. Distance yourselves from injustice, for indeed it is the greatest of wrongdoings and the biggest of sins.
4. Keep away from injustice for whoever acts unjustly, his days are abhorred.
5. Keep away from injustice, for indeed it will depart from the one whom you oppress and will remain upon you.
6. Keep away from oppression, for verily it hastens one's downfall and causes tears [of regret and sorrow] to flow from the one who acts upon it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Keep away from injustice, for it is the biggest sin; and verily the unjust will surely be chastised on the Day of Resurrection because of his injustice.
8. Keep away from oppression, for verily Allah hastens chastisement for the oppressor and sends down exemplary punishments upon him.
9. Avoid the downfalls of transgression, the disgraces of deceit and the arousal of the latent, reprehensible evil.
10. Know that injustice is of three kinds: the injustice that is not forgiven, the injustice that is not left [unquestioned], and the injustice that is forgiven without being questioned. As for the injustice that is not forgiven, it is the ascribing of partners to Allah as He, the Most High, says: 'Verily Allah does not forgive that any partner should be ascribed to Him, but He forgives anything besides that to whomever He wishes'. As for the injustice that is forgiven, it is the injustice of a person to himself in committing some small sins. And as for the injustice that is not left unquestioned, it is the injustice of the people on one another. In this case the punishment is severe, not [simply] wounding with knives or striking with whips, rather it is a punishment in comparison to which all this seems small.
11. The most loathsome of traits is aggression.
12. The quickest thing is the downfall of an oppressor.
13. The vilest oppression is [that which is practiced] when one has power.
14. The vilest transgression is transgression against the intimate [friends].
15. The most loathsome injustice is your withholding the rights of Allah.
16. The most tyrannical person is he who oppresses the one who is fair to him.
17. The actions that are most effective in bringing chastisement are oppression and ingratitude for blessings.
18. Verily the evil that brings the quickest retribution is injustice.
19. Indeed the ugliness in injustice is equivalent to the beauty in justice.
20. Injustice is [the cause of divine] punishment.
21. Oppression takes away blessing.
22. Injustice brings [divine wrath and] chastisement.
23. Injustice has adverse consequences.
24. Oppression puts an end to blessings.
25. Injustice drives away blessings.
26. Oppression brings [divine wrath and] chastisements.
27. Injustice causes one to enter hellfire.
28. Oppression leads to destruction.
29. Injustice is the most wicked vice.
30. Injustice is the ruination of the populace.
31. Power is expunged by aggression.
32. Injustice has a series of destructive consequences.
33. Oppression is the quickest thing to be punished.
34. Injustice destroys homes.
35. Injustice destroys the one who practices it.
36. Oppression drives [one] towards utter destruction.
37. Injustice is a crime that cannot be forgotten.
38. Oppression causes the downfall of men and brings [their] deaths closer.
39. When power prompts you to be unjust to people, then remember the power of Allah, the Glorified, to punish you; and [recall the fact] that what you have brought upon them will depart from them while it will remain with you.
40. By injustice, blessings are removed.
41. By oppression, chastisement is brought down.
42. How bad an injustice is the injustice to one who is submissive!
43. How evil a provision for the Hereafter is oppressiveness to the servants [of Allah]!
44. Continued injustice takes away blessings and brings forth chastisement.
45. Remedy injustice with justice and cure poverty with alms and charity.
46. The cornerstone of ignorance is oppression.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

47. One who embarks of injustice is met with ruin.
48. Whoever rides the mount of injustice, his mount will stumble with him.
49. The most evil characteristic of the souls is oppression.
50. Two things are such that one cannot be safe from their [evil] consequences: injustice and evil (or gluttony).
51. Counter oppression with justice.
52. Submission to tyranny causes destruction and annihilates the kingdom.
53. Being unjust to the weak is the most grievous injustice.
54. Injustice to the one who has surrendered is the greatest crime.
55. Being unjust to the people corrupts one's Hereafter.
56. One who oppresses the people has manifested his obdurate opposition to Allah, the Glorified.
57. The injustice of a man in this world is the symbol of his wretchedness in the Hereafter.
58. Injustice to orphans and widows brings down divine wrath and takes away the blessings from those who possess them.
59. In tyranny there is transgression.
60. The destruction of the populace is in tyranny.
61. How many a blessing has been removed by injustice!
62. Injustice is enough of a dispeller of blessing and an invoker of chastisement.
63. Oppression is sufficient for the removal of blessing.
64. There is nothing that is more summoning of the removal of blessing and the hastening of chastisement than remaining steadfast upon injustice.
65. One who is praised for injustice is being plotted against [and deceived].
66. One whose injustice is excessive, his regret is abundant.
67. Whoever unsheathes the sword of oppression [on the people], his head becomes its sheath.
68. One of the most grievous injustices is the injustice of [or against] the honourable ones.
69. Do not make the nobles desirous of your cruelty [in their favour over those who oppose them].
70. Do not stretch out your hand against one who is unable to stave it off from himself.
71. Never oppress one who has no helper except Allah.
72. Consider not the injustice of the one who is unjust to you as grave, for indeed his striving only harms himself and benefits you; and it is not the reward of one who pleases you that you should offend him.
73. There is no evil like injustice.
74. There is no victory with oppression.
75. He who does not refrain from oppressing people does not believe in the Hereafter.
76. One from whose oppression people are not safe is not safe from the punishment of Allah.
77. A man may sleep after the loss of a child but he will not sleep under [the yoke of] oppression.
78. Tyranny is one of the two destroyers.
79. Injustice makes the foot slip, takes away blessings and destroys nations.
80. Injustice in this world is ruination and in the Hereafter, [it is] destruction.
81. Keep away from tyranny, for indeed the tyrant will not [even] smell the fragrance of Paradise.
82. Tyranny brings negative consequences.
83. Tyranny is the antithesis of justice.
84. One whose violations increase, his exasperation [also] increases.
85. Oppression is an eraser [of good deeds].
86. Oppression brings the quickest punishment.

Notes

1. Or: ...it makes the [downfall of] one who acts upon it an example for others.

383. THE UNJUST

1. he most unjust of men is one who establishes the practice of oppression and abolishes the practice of justice.
2. The unjust is blameworthy.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Punishment awaits the unjust.
4. On the Day of Judgment, the oppressor of the people will be afflicted, chastised and despoiled because of his injustice.
5. For every oppressor there is a reprisal.
6. For every oppressor there is a punishment that he cannot escape, and a downfall that will not pass him by.
7. For the unjust there is reprisal.
8. For the unjust there is a biting of his hand.
9. There are three signs of the unjust among the people: being unjust to the one who is above him by disobedience, and to the one below him by overruling him, and supporting the faction of oppressors.
10. One who oppresses [others] gets oppressed.
11. One who acts unjustly corrupts his affair.
12. One who oppresses [others] breaks [and shortens] his lifespan.
13. One who is oppressive is destroyed by his oppression.
14. One who is unjust is annihilated by his injustice.
15. One who is unjust, his downfall is great.
16. One who oppresses, his destruction is hastened.
17. One who is unjust is ruined by his injustice.
18. One who is unjust, his life is broken [and shortened].
19. Whoever oppresses the servants of Allah, it is Allah who becomes his enemy instead of His servants.
20. Whoever oppresses the people, Allah becomes his adversary.
21. One who is unjust, his life gets broken and his injustice annihilates him.
22. The destruction of one who acts with oppression is hastened by Allah.
23. Whoever embarks on the clear path of injustice, his days are abhorred.
24. How close is chastisement to the unjust!
25. How great is the chastisement of the oppressor!
26. How great is the burden [of sin] of the one who is unjust and transgresses, and acts tyrannically and oppresses!
27. He who fears falling [into hellfire] does not act unjustly.
28. Far be it that an oppressor is saved from the punishment of Allah and the greatness of His wrath.
29. Even though Allah, the Exalted, gives time to the oppressor, His grasp will not spare him and He will ambush him on the passage of his way and the place where his saliva runs down.
30. The aggressive tyrant has many opponents and enemies.
31. For the oppressor there is downfall.
32. One who oppresses is crushed.
33. Woe be to the oppressors who transgress against the Fairest of all judges and the Knower of the inner thoughts of the hidden consciences.
34. The tyrant is hated and dispraised, even if nothing of his tyranny reaches his dispraiser, and the just one is the opposite of this.
35. The most oppressive of people is the one who considers his tyranny to be justice on his part.
36. The reign of a tyrant is from the contingent [and temporary] things.
37. There is no good in the rule of a tyrant.
38. The unjust transgressor is awaiting one of two chastisements [of this world or the Hereafter].

Notes

1. Referring to Q25:27 where Allah says: The day when the wrongdoer will bite his hand and say 'I wish I had followed the Apostle's way!'

384. THE OPPRESSED

1. Beware of the cry of the oppressed, for verily he asks Allah for his right, and Allah, the Glorified, is more bountiful than that He should be asked for a right except that He grants it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Verily the cry of the oppressed is answered by Allah, the Glorified, because he is asking for his right, and Allah is far greater than that He should deny a person his right.
3. When you see an oppressed person, then help him against the oppressor.
4. The oppressors of the oppressed are given respite by Allah, the Glorified, but are not overlooked.
5. At times the oppressed are assisted.
6. Be a helper for the oppressed and an enemy of the oppressor.
7. Whoever does not seek justice for the oppressed from the oppressor, his sins are magnified.
8. Whoever does not seek justice for the oppressed from the oppressor, Allah will take away his power.
9. How close is succour to the oppressed!
10. The oppressed does not prevail without a helper.
11. The day of the oppressed over the oppressor is [going to be] more severe than the day of the oppressor upon the oppressed.
12. The oppressed awaits reward [in the Hereafter].

385. USURPED RIGHTS

1. In amassing the usurped rights [of the people] there is cessation [and loss] of power.
2. In [keeping] the usurped rights of the servants, there is amassing of sins.

386. CONJECTURE

1. The surmise of a believer is a divination.
2. The conjecture of a man is to the extent of his intellect.
3. The conjecture of a person is the measure of his intellect and his action is the truest witness about his origin.
4. The conjecture of the people of insight and intelligence is the closest thing to correctness.
5. One whose supposition [about others] is good, overlooks [their lapses].
6. One whose assumption [about others] is negative, scrutinizes.
7. One who thinks positively [about others], his intention becomes good.
8. One who thinks ill [of others], his innermost thoughts become evil.
9. One who thinks ill [of others], his imagination becomes evil.
10. When one thinks good of you, then prove his supposition to be true.
11. One who belies the evil assumption about his brother has a sound covenant [of brotherhood] and a relaxed heart.
12. One whose thoughts [about others] are negative assumes the disloyalty of the one who is not disloyal to him.
13. One who thinks ill of one who is not disloyal ends up thinking positively of that which is not so.
14. One who does not think positively of others alienates himself from everyone.
15. Little conjecture [and uncertainty] is [a means of falling into] doubt.
16. By Allah! Allah, the Glorified, will not punish a believer after he believes except because of his thinking ill [of others] and his bad character.
17. Do not think of a word that has been spoken by someone as evil while you find a possible positive meaning in it.
18. The one who thinks ill [of others] has no faith.
19. A servant does not think positively of Allah, the Glorified, but that Allah, the Glorified, is just as his positive thoughts are of Him.
20. One who thinks positively about people earns love from them.
21. Thinking ill of a virtuous person is the gravest sin and the ugliest injustice.
22. Thinking ill of one who is not disloyal stems from vileness.
23. Thinking ill corrupts matters and incites one to evils.
24. Thinking evil (of others) destroys the one who adopts it and saves the one who avoids it.
25. One who is overcome by negative thoughts leaves no room for reconciliation between him and his friend.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

26. Thinking good of others lightens one's grief and saves one from being shackled by sin.
27. Thinking positive of others is one of the best practices and most excellent allotments.
28. The positive thinking of a servant about Allah, the Glorified, is to the extent of his hope in Him.
29. Thinking positive is one of the best attributes and the most bountiful gifts.
30. Thinking positive means making your actions sincere and hoping that Allah will forgive your missteps.
31. One who thinks positively [about others] attains Paradise.
32. One who thinks positively of Allah, attains Paradise.
33. Be careful not to think negatively, for indeed thinking ill of others corrupts worship and increases the burden [of sin].
34. Conjecture is suspicion.
35. Correct conjecture is from the qualities of the people of understanding.
36. Conjecture errs, but certainty is [always] right and does err.
37. The bane of religion is thinking ill [of others].
38. In an age when righteousness prevails over a people, if a person entertains an evil suspicion about another person from whom no evil has become evident, then he has been unjust and has transgressed.
39. In an age when corruption prevails over a people, if a man thinks positive of another man then he has put himself in peril.
40. Thinking positive is a comfort for the heart and security for religion.
41. There is no faith with negative thinking.
42. Correct conjecture is one for the two [possible] views.
43. Cowardice, greediness and stinginess are evil characteristics that are brought together by thinking ill of Allah, the Glorified.

387. SUPPORT

1. The best [form of] help is giving support.

388. PRECAUTION

1. How good a foresight precaution is!
2. The best equipage is precaution.
3. One who has the backing of Allah [and trusts in Him], his subjugation [by the enemy] becomes impossible.
4. The one who is precautionary may [also at times] get afflicted.

389. THE EXTERIORS

1. Uprightness of the exteriors is a symbol of the soundness of the inner consciences.
2. For every exterior there is a hidden interior that is like it, so one who's exterior is good his interior is also good, and whoever has a bad exterior has a bad interior.

390. LIGHTNESS OF ONE'S BURDEN

1. In having a light burden there is inner peace and the safeguarding of [one's] status.

391. SERVITUDE

1. One who fulfils the conditions of servitude deserves to be freed.

392. WORSHIP AND THE WORSHIPPER

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Sincere worship means that a person [puts his] hopes in none other than his Lord and fears nothing but his wrongdoing.
2. Reserve for yourself the best times and portions for that which is between you and Allah, the Glorified.
3. The best worship is contemplation.
4. The best worship is safeguarding the stomach and private parts [from the forbidden].
5. Worship is [a means to] success.
6. Continued worship is proof of success in attainment of prosperity.
7. The adornment of worship is humility [and submissiveness].
8. The probity of worship is [in] having trust in Allah.
9. The goal [and purpose] of worship is obedience.
10. In secluding oneself for the worship of Allah there are treasures of benefit.
11. He who makes his worship sincere succeeds in attaining prosperity.
12. Little that is practiced continually is better than [doing] a lot that makes one weary.
13. Little which is easy for you to act upon is better than a lot that is too heavy for you to bear.
14. Little that continues is better than a lot that is discontinuous.
15. How can one who does not abstain from lowly desires discover the delight of worship?
16. How can one who has not been aided by [divine granted] success derive joy in worship?
17. One who seeks nearness [to Allah] is not brought closer [to Him] by anything other than the worship of Allah.
18. The worshipper without knowledge is like the donkey that drives a mill, it moves round and round but does not depart from its place.
19. Verily a group worshipped Allah, the Glorified, out of desire [for reward] - that is the worship of the traders, and a group worshipped Him out of fear [of punishment] - that is the worship of the slaves, and a group worshipped Him out of gratitude - and that is the worship of the freemen.

393. SERVANTS

1. When Allah loves a servant, he inspires him with the goodness of worship.
2. When Allah loves a servant, he makes trustworthiness beloved to him.
3. When Allah honours a servant, He occupies him with His love.
4. When Allah specially chooses a servant, He inspires him with [religious] devotion.
5. When Allah chooses a servant he covers him with His awe.
6. When Allah loves a servant, He adorns him with tranquillity and forbearing.
7. When Allah loves a servant, He inspires him with truth.
8. When Allah honours a servant, He helps him to establish justice.
9. When Allah loves a servant, He makes him hate wealth and shortens his hopes.
10. When Allah loves a servant, He bestows him with a good heart and an upright character.
11. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He grants him a sound intellect and upright action.
11. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He safeguards his stomach and private parts from the unlawful.
12. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He inspires him with contentment and sets his wife right for him.
13. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He makes his stomach abstain from [unlawful] food and his private parts from that which is forbidden.
14. When Allah, the Glorified, wishes goodness for a servant, He inspires him to talk less, eat less and sleep less.
15. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He makes him learned in religion and inspires him with certitude.
16. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He inspires him with contentment, so he becomes satisfied with the minimum and covers himself with chastity [and abstinence from the unlawful].
17. When Allah wishes good for a servant, He inspires him with moderation and good management and keeps him away from mismanagement and wastefulness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

18. When Allah loves a servant, He inspires him with right guidance and makes him successful in His obedience.
19. He ('a) praised a man saying: This is one whose peacefulness benefits and injustice is not feared from him. When he says, he does and when he put in charge, he is just.
20. He ('a) said about the one whom he praised: He is the unfold [and clarifier] of the obscure, the guide in vast deserts and the repeller of complex difficulties.
21. The best of servants is one who is delighted when he does good and when he does evil, he repents.
22. People are created by [Allah's] power, raised up with constraint and made to die through pangs of death.
23. If the servants were to stop when they are ignorant [about something], they would neither apostatize nor would they go astray.
24. When Allah humiliates (or abases) a servant, He denies him knowledge.
25. When Allah wants something bad for a servant, He makes wealth beloved to him and extends his [false] hopes.
28. When Allah, the Glorified, wishes to remove a blessing from a servant, the first thing that He alters [and takes away from him] is his intellect, and losing it is the most difficult thing for him.²⁷ ؎
29. Verily, one of the creatures most hated by Allah, the Exalted, is the man who has been left on his own [by Allah] and has strayed from the right path, moving on without a guide.
30. A servant is a servant, even if he is assisted by [divine] destiny.
31. The beauty of a servant is [in his] obedience.

Notes

1. The Islamic view is that all human beings are servants of Allah, as opposed to the Christian view wherein people are regarded as Children of God.

394. TAKING LESSONS AND EXAMPLES

1. Take lesson and you will be deterred [from evil].
2. Take lesson and you will become content.
3. Take lessons from [the lives of] those who preceded you before those who are after you take lessons from you.
4. Take counsel from the examples [of others], learn lessons from the changing situations and take benefit from the Warners.
5. Where are the 'Amāliqa and the children of the 'Amāliqa?
6. Where are the tyrants and the children of the tyrants?
7. Where are the people of the cities of Rass who killed the Prophets and extinguished the light of the Messengers?
8. Where are those who rallied the troops and inhabited the cities?
9. Where are those who said, "Who is more powerful than us and is greater in assemblage?"
10. Where are those who left the best heritage, were most just in their actions and had the biggest kingdoms?
11. Where are those who vanquished the armies and travelled in the thousands?
12. Where are those who built kingdoms, paved passages, and aided the aggrieved and hosted guests?
13. Where is the one who strived and struggled, and prepared and mobilized [all possible resources]?
14. Where is the one who built and erected, paved and prepared, accumulated and counted?
15. Where is Khosrau and Caesar and Tubba' and Himyar
16. Where is the one who stored and amassed, and accumulated wealth upon wealth thereby multiplying it?
17. Where is the one who fortified and strengthened, and adorned and decorated?
18. Where is the one who accumulated and increased, and stored and amassed, and considered the future of his son?
19. Where are those who lived longer than you and left a greater heritage?
20. Where are the ones who were larger in numbers, had stronger armies and had greater effect?

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

21. Where are the kings and Khosraus?
22. Where are the children of the Yellow and the pharaohs?
23. Where are those who ruled the extremities of this world?
24. Where are those who used to humiliate their enemies and take possession of their forelocks [by enslaving them]?
25. Where are those to whom the nations were subservient?
26. Where are those who attained their highest ambitions in this world?
27. Verily for those who remain [behind] there is an example in those who have passed.
28. Verily for the latter there is an admonishment in the former.
29. Verily the passing away of those who depart is a lesson for the community that remains behind.
30. Taking example yields [the fruit of] inerrancy.
31. Time shows you examples.
32. Taking lesson is beneficial in [attaining] right guidance.
33. When Allah loves a servant, He gives him direction through examples.
34. You have been left with examples from the vestiges of those who passed away before you, so take lesson from them.
35. Continually taking lessons leads to perspicacity and bears the fruit of restraint [from evil].
36. I am bound by responsibility for what I say and am answerable for it. Verily, one for whom examples [of the past] have clearly shown that which was before him of exemplary punishments [given by Allah to wrongdoers] is prevented by God-wariness from falling into dubious [and questionable] actions.
37. Attest to the truth that has passed and take lesson from what has elapsed of this world, because indeed its one phase resembles the other and its end catches up to its beginning.
38. The prolonged drawing of lessons [from the past] impels one to be precautionous.
39. In every glance there is a lesson.
40. In every lesson that is drawn there is discernment.
41. In the succession of days there is lesson for the creatures.
42. Successful is the one who has a habit of taking lesson [from the past] and a tendency towards being precautionous.
43. He who has been deterred [from evil] has taken lesson [from the past].
44. He who takes a lesson from the past [that has gone] has taken a lesson for the remaining [future].
45. Every day benefits you with lessons if you accompany it with contemplation.
46. For the people of intelligence, what they are aware of is enough of a lesson for them.
47. Lessons [from events] have indeed become evident for you, and you have been deterred by what is in it of a deterrence; and after the Prophet of Allah, none have conveyed [the message] from Allah like the Warners.
48. If you took lessons from what has passed of your life, you would safeguard that which remains [of it].
49. One who takes lesson [from the past] is cautious.
50. One whose consideration [of past events from which he draws lessons] increases, his mistakes decrease.
51. One who takes a lesson from the vicissitudes of time is careful of [the evil of] others.
52. One who does not take lesson from others does not take precaution for himself.
53. One who takes admonishment from the examples [of the past] is deterred [from evil].
54. One who does not take a lesson from the passage of days is not deterred by reproach.
55. One who takes a lesson from vicissitudes does not rely on the peacefulness of time.
56. One who recognizes the lessons [of the past], it is as if he is living among the ancients.
57. One who does not take lesson from the vicissitudes of this world, advice has no effect on him.
58. One who considers matters arrives at their [appropriate] criteria.
59. One who takes lesson from the vicissitudes of this world, his desires lessen.
60. How many the lessons are, and how few of them are learnt!
61. There is no lesson to be taken for the one who has no restraint.
62. Taking lesson steers one towards right guidance.

Notes

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. This refers to drawing lessons and examples from what happened to oneself or to others in the past.
2. These were strong and oppressive people from the children of 'Amlīq, who was from the progeny of Nuh ('a).
3. This was the title of Persian kings.
4. Kings of Yemen.
5. A father of one of the influential tribes of Yemen.
6. These were the rulers of Rome who were called 'Yellow' because (according to some reports) when the Romans lost a war to the Abyssinians, their womenfolk were ravaged and the children produced were of a yellowish skin colour.

395. REPRIMAND

1. Goodwill [and friendly admonishment] is the life of friendship [and affection].
2. Too much reprimand indicates [one's] suspicion.
3. He who seeks forgiveness (or is indigent) is not reprimanded.
4. Do not reprimand the ignorant one as he will hate you, but reprimand the wise one as he will love you [for it].
5. Never be excessive in reprimanding, for indeed it brings about ill feelings and calls toward hatred; and seek to appease the one whom you hope to reprimand.
6. When you reprimand then leave some room [to make amends and do not be excessive in reprimanding].

396. EMANCIPATION

1. When you become the owner [of a slave], then emancipate [him].

397. SLIP UP

1. The slip up of impudence cannot be pardoned.

398. CONCEIT

1. The most alienating estrangement is conceit.
2. Conceit is destruction.
3. Conceit is folly.
4. Conceit is the cornerstone of foolishness.
5. Conceit is the cornerstone of ignorance.
6. Conceit is the symbol of foolishness.
7. Self-admiration prevents growth.
8. Conceit is the most harmful associate.
9. Self-admiration is contrary to reason.
10. Conceit corrupts the intellect.
11. Conceit prevents growth.
12. Becoming conceited because of a good deed nullifies it.
13. Conceit is the bane of dignity.
14. Conceit manifests [one's] shortcoming.
15. The admiration of a person for himself is folly.
16. Self-admiration is contrary to reason and the bane of the intellects.
17. When you wish your merits to be glorified among the people, then do not glorify yourself.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

18. When your self-importance is increased by the position [of authority] you are in, and this brings about arrogance or vanity in you, then look at the greatness of the authority of Allah and His power, the power which you do not even possess over yourself, for indeed this will mellow your recalcitrance, cure your vehemence and bring back to you that which had departed from you of your intellect.
19. By being pleased with oneself, vices and faults become manifest.
20. The fruit of conceit is hatred.
21. The evil that befalls you is better than the good that makes you conceited.
22. One who admires himself will be ridiculed because of it.
23. One who admires his [own] opinion becomes abased (or goes astray).
24. Whoever is proud [and pleased] with his action, his intellect gets afflicted.
25. One who admires his [own] speech, his intellect has departed.
26. One whose self-admiration increases, his correctness reduces.
27. One who becomes conceited by his action nullifies his reward.
28. One who admires his good state falls short of attaining good expedencies.
29. Adversity does not descend upon the one who abandons conceit and lassitude.
30. No one admires his own opinion except the ignorant one.
31. Nothing damages [one's] merits [and good deeds] like conceit.
32. What has the son of Adam to do with conceit? His beginning is foul semen and his end is a rotting corpse, and in between these he is a carrier of waste products.
33. There is no alienation more desolating than conceit.
34. The self-admiration of a person is proof of his deficiency and a symbol of his weak intellect.
35. Keep away from self-conceit and love for praise, for these are the strongest opportunities for Satan.
36. Be careful not to be self-conceited, thereby making deficiency and enmity manifest upon [and against] you.
37. Be cautious not to consider the sin of others as great while you deem it to be small [when it comes] from yourself, or to consider your worship as abundant while you deem the same to be less when performed by others.

399. THE SELF-ADMIRING ONE

1. The self-admiring one has no intelligence.
2. The self-admiring one has no [valid] opinion [as he never consults with anyone else].

400. INABILITY

1. Inability accompanied by espousing goodness is better than power accompanied by embarking on evil.
2. Inability is waste.
3. Inability is ruin.
4. Inability is a cause of loss.
5. Inability is the worst riding mount.
6. Inability bears the fruit of destruction.
7. Inability makes enemies covetous.
8. The fruit of inability is losing what is sought.
9. Inability [and failure] is [in] occupying yourself with that which has been guaranteed for you instead of that which has been made obligatory upon you, and abandoning contentment with what you have been given.

401. THE POWERLESS

1. The most powerless of people are those who consider themselves the safest from sudden events and [from] the onslaught of their deaths.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Sometimes the powerless one acquires what he needs.

402. THE DERRIERE

1. The derriere is one of the two faces.

403. HASTE AND THE HASTY

1. Haste is dispraised in every affair except in that which repels evil.
2. Beware of haste, for indeed it bears the fruit of regret.
3. Keep away from haste, for verily it is the symbol of loss and regret.
4. Keep away from haste, for surely it is associated with error.
5. Haste (or conceit) leads to error.
6. Haste prevents one from [successfully] achieving his goal.
7. Making haste before [having the] ability, causes distress.
8. The fruit of haste is error.
9. Being hasty before [possessing the] ability is part of foolishness.
10. With haste, errors abound.
11. The hasty one is in the wrong, even if he acquires [what he seeks].
12. The one who rides on [the mount of] haste is on the verge of stumbling.
13. In haste there is error.
14. In haste there is regret.
15. It is seldom that the view of a hasty person turns out to be correct.
16. It is seldom that the scheme of the hasty is successful or that the love of the one who is fed up lasts.
17. Few are the ones who make haste and are not ruined by it.
18. Everyone who is hastened asks for more time.
19. Too much haste makes a person slip.
20. A hasty person never gets praised [for his haste].
21. One who makes haste, errs.
22. One who is hasty makes mistakes.
23. One who makes haste, his errors increase?
24. One who acts hastily falls into error.
25. One who is hasty regrets his haste.
26. One who acts hastily is made to stumble by error.
27. One who acts hastily is bestridden by blame.
28. There is no achievement for the hasty.
29. Of all people, the one with the greatest regret and the most reproof is the hasty, rash person who is not subdued by his intellect until after his affair is lost.
30. Leave haste aside, for indeed the one who is hasty in matters neither attains what he seeks nor is his affair praised.
31. The hasty one errs or is close to [erring].

404. THE DENUMERABLE

1. Every denumerable thing can diminish.

405. READINESS AND PREPARATION

1. The best preparation is that by which one's Hereafter is improved.
2. Lighten your burden, for indeed the goal is in front of you and time is behind you, driving you forward.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Lighten your burden so as to catch up [with those who are ahead you], for indeed the last among you are only being awaited by the first among you [who have preceded them].
4. Prepare for your journey, keep your gaze on the flash of salvation and travel on swift [and girded] mounts [of good deeds].
5. Return from negligence, awake from slumber, prepare yourself for the move and gather provisions for the journey.
6. One who has prepared for his journey is delighted upon his arrival.
7. Select your abode for yourself before the day of your landing and prepare your dwelling before your arrival.

406. JUSTICE AND THE JUST

1. Justice is the better of the two policies.
2. Justice is the cornerstone of faith and the accumulator of benevolence.
3. Justice is the mainstay of the populace and the splendour of the rulers.
4. Justice means that you act equitably when you are oppressed, and kindness means that when you gain authority, you forgive.
5. Be just and you will rule.
6. Be just and you will rule.
7. Be just and your power will last.
8. Have recourse to justice with good intention for the populace, reduced covetousness and increased piety.
9. The loftiest of endowments is justice.
10. The best [form of] justice is assisting the oppressed.
11. The most just of all people is he who is equitable to the one who has oppressed him.
12. Verily being fair in [your] ruling and eschewing oppression are part of justice.
13. Indeed justice is the scale of Allah, the Glorified, which He has placed among the creation and installed for the establishment of truth; so do not oppose Him in His scale and do not contradict Him in His authority.
14. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has enjoined justice and benevolence and has forbidden indecency and injustice.
15. Justice brings harmony while oppression causes deviation.
16. Justice is the soul of testimony.
17. Justice is the life of decrees.
18. Justice is the best testimony.
19. Justice reforms the people.
20. Justice is a merit for the ruler.
21. Justice is the greatest of riches.
22. Justice is equity.
23. Justice is a foundation [for a healthy society]; oppression is destruction.
24. The just [ruler] is a custodian who awaits one of the two rewards (or the better of the two rewards).
25. The most just among the creation is one who judges best according to the truth.
26. The most just of all people is he who is equitable despite having power, and the one who has the greatest clemency is he who is clement despite having authority.
27. Through justice, bounties are multiplied.
28. Through justice, the populace is reformed.
29. Allah, the Glorified, made justice a mainstay for mankind, a purification from oppressions and vices, and as an opening for [the spreading of] Islam.
30. Virtuous justice is [the cause of] organization [and harmony] among the people.
31. The best of policies is justice.
32. How can one who is unjust to himself be just with others?!
33. Justice suffices as a means of governance.
34. Let your riding mount be justice, for one who rides on it gains mastery.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

35. Justice can never be achieved until injustice falters [and comes to an end].
36. It is not from justice to judge a reliable person by conjecture [instead of accepting his testimony].
37. One who is just gains [and strengthens his] power [and authority].
38. The ruling of one who is just gets acted upon.
39. The status of one who is just becomes great.
40. One whose justice increases, his days are praised.
41. Allah unfolds His mercy upon one who acts justly in the lands.
42. One whose deed done in private matches what he does openly and whose actions are consistent with his speech, then he is the one who has fulfilled the trust and whose justice has been established.
43. Whoever acts justly, Allah fortifies his kingdom.
44. Take with justice but give with munificence; you will possess two virtues.
45. The policy of justice comprises of three things: judiciousness in leniency, fairness in investigation and moderation in munificence.
46. Two things are such that their reward cannot be weighed: forgiveness and justice.
47. The uprightness [and betterment] of the populace is [achieved through] justice.
48. You must be just with [both] friend and foe, and moderate in [both] poverty and wealth.
49. The pinnacle of justice is for a person to be just with himself.
50. In justice there is benevolence.
51. In justice there is betterment of the people.
52. Following the way of Allah and the stability of nations lies in justice
53. In justice there is comfort; and one for whom justice is beleaguering, then oppression will be more beleaguering [and difficult] for him.
54. From the exigencies of justice is the forbidding of oppression.
55. Nothing brings prosperity to the lands like justice.
56. Do not let the weak lose hope in your justice.
57. There is no justice better than returning the right of the oppressed.
58. Justice is life.
59. Justice is the best judgment.
60. Justice is [a means of attaining] success and dignity.
61. Justice is the mainstay of the populace (or of the creation).
62. Justice is a merit of the sultan.
63. Justice is the system of leadership.
64. Justice is the strongest foundation.
65. Justice is the best trait.
66. Justice relieves the one who acts upon it from being shackled by the rights of others.
67. The bane of justice is the powerful tyrant.
68. When your judgment is applied upon yourself [thereby showing your justice], the souls of [other] people summon each other towards your justice.
69. The bane of the just [ones] is lack of piety.
70. The coming to power of the just is from the necessities.
71. Many a just person is an oppressor.

Notes

1. Or (according to Ibn Abi al-Hadid's explanation): It is not from justice to judge upon what is known [for certain] using [mere] conjecture.

407. THE MIDDLE COURSE

1. The best affair (of this ummah) is [taking] the middle course; to it return those who have gone to the extreme and with it join those who have lagged behind.

408. ENMITY AND THE ENEMY

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Being bound by straps is better [and more preferable] than accompanying the adversary.
2. The cause of enmity is lack of empathy [and consideration for others].
3. Enmity of near ones is more unpleasant than the sting of the scorpions.
4. Too much enmity is disquieting for the hearts.
5. Whoever stubbornly opposes the people, they hate him.
6. Whoever manifests his enmity, his stratagems are reduced.
7. One who tries to overcome his adversary has embarked on a struggle.
8. One who accompanies his adversary exhausts his body.
9. One who reforms [and reconciles with] his enemy increases in his number.
10. Whoever is unconcerned about you, then he is your enemy.
11. Whoever accompanies his adversary, he will expose his flaw and torment his heart.
12. One who is courteous with his adversaries is safe from battles.
13. One who sleeps, neglecting his enemy, is jolted awake by [his] crafty schemes.
14. One who finds the enmity of men sweet tastes the bitterness of the hardships of war.
15. One who shows enmity towards the people reaps the fruit of regret.
16. Whoever hides your fault from you and exposes your fault in your absence, then he is your [real] enemy, so be careful of him.
17. Whoever shows enmity [with the people] his paths becomes rugged, his affair becomes difficult and his way out becomes narrow.
18. One who reforms his adversaries attains his goal.
19. One who derives benefit from harming you will never be free from his enmity for you in every situation.
20. Never do two people [or groups] quarrel but that the more foolish of the two wins the argument.
21. Acting courteously with the enemies of Allah in their domains is a safeguard from the chastisement of Allah and a caution from the raging tribulations of this world.
22. Struggling against the enemies in their dominions and fighting against them despite their power is abandoning the command of Allah and exposing oneself to the tribulations of this world.
23. Do not be adversaries of the blessings of Allah upon you.
24. Do not face your adversary before you are powerful enough [to defeat him].
25. Do not be fooled by the courteousness of the enemy for indeed he is like water, even if its heating by fire is prolonged, it is not prevented from extinguishing it.
26. Do not confront your enemy while he is charging towards you, for indeed his charge will aid him to overcome you and do not confront him when he is fleeing away from you, for indeed his flight is sufficient for you in dealing with him.
27. Do not declare your enmity to your enemy and do not rebuke your friend; and accept the excuse [you are given] even if it is a lie, and do not give [a forceful] response despite having the power to do so, even if it be your right.
28. When you have hatred [for someone] then do not disassociate yourself [completely - and leave some room for possible future friendship].
29. Let the most hated of people to you and the furthest of them from you be the one who always seeks out the faults of people.
30. One who hates you incites you [to wrongdoing].
31. The enemy has been named 'enemy' because he wrongs you; so one who flatters you for your faults is in actuality an enemy who is wronging you.
32. Keep away from the enemies of Allah and maintain ties with the friends of Allah.
33. The worst of enemies is the one who goes to the greatest lengths and is most secretive in his plotting.
34. At times enemies may deceive [and pretend to be well-wishers].
35. One who sows enmity [and aggression] reaps loss.
36. Treating the enemy with kindness is one of the two victories.
37. Being courteous when trying to accomplish something is more effective than other means.
38. With regards to your enemy, be on the lookout for possibility [of defeating him] and seize opportunity, you will be [thus become] triumphant.
39. The weakest of enemies in plotting is the one who manifests his enmity.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

40. One enemy is plenty.
41. Reforming [and reconciliation with] the enemies through good words and beautiful actions is easier than facing them and combating them with the torment of battle.
42. One who reforms [and reconciles with] his opponents attains his goal.
43. Do not consider yourself safe from an enemy, even if he is grateful.
44. Never underestimate an enemy, even if he is weak.
45. Showing enmity towards the people is a trait of the ignorant ones.
46. One who unsheathes the sword of aggression is killed by it.
47. Stances of [enmity and] hatred anger the Most Merciful, please Satan and disgrace man.
48. One who exceeds in [his] animosity has sinned and one who falls short [and does not show enmity when it is required] is defeated.
49. He who has animosity [towards others] is not capable of fearing Allah.
50. Quarrels [and disputes] manifest the foolishness of a person and do not increase in his right.
51. One whose transgression (or antagonism) increases, his enemies increase.
52. Power is lost through aggression [and oppression].

Notes

1. Or: Do not be enemies [of each other] for the [sake of the] blessings of Allah upon you.

409. APOLOGIZING AND OFFERING EXCUSES

1. Being needless of offering an excuse is more honourable than truthfulness [in your excuse].
2. Apologizing necessitates pardoning.
3. Repeating the apology is a reminder of the sin.
4. One who seeks pardon without having sinned has imposed the sin upon his soul.
5. One who admits his wrongdoing deserves forgiveness.
6. One who apologizes in a befitting manner deserves to be forgiven.
7. One who apologizes has sought pardon.
8. He who seeks pardon has not sinned.
9. How good an intercessor seeking pardon is!
10. Do not offer an excuse to the one who would like to find you without an excuse.
11. There is no intercessor more successful than apology.
12. Repeating the apology is a reminder of the [past] sins.
13. Seeking pardon (or taking lesson) is a sincere warner.
14. When you do wrong, apologize.
15. Sometimes the admission of guilt for having committed a sin dispenses with the need for seeking pardon.
16. Too much apology magnifies the sins.
17. Keep away from that for which there is little denial, even if the excuses from you are many, for it is not such that everyone who speaks ill [of you] can be excused by you.

Notes

1. Or: Not doing anything that would require apology is rarer than truthfulness.
2. It is a warner in the sense that the shame it causes acts as a warning for one not to do anything that would force him to seek pardon again.

410. DIGNITY AND REPUTATION

1. Safeguard [your] reputations with wealth.
2. Nothing preserves reputations like turning away from vile traits and evil objectives.
3. Protect your reputations by spending your wealth generously.
4. Abundance of wealth [that is attained] by the derogation of reputations is ignobility.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. Plenitude of religion and dignity [that is acquired] through generously spending wealth is a sublime gift.
6. Protect your dignity with your worldly possessions and you will be honoured, do good to others and you will be served, show clemency and you will be put forward (or you will advance).
7. The plenitude of dignity is [attained] through the generous spending of wealth, and the uprightness of religion is [realized] through devaluing this world.
8. Nothing safeguards reputations like spending generously.
9. Do not make your dignity a subject of the speech of every speaker [by engaging in shameful deeds].
10. One who sacrifices his dignity is abased.
11. One who sacrifices his dignity is humiliated.
12. One who preserves his dignity is revered.
13. Whoever considers his dignity to be precious, money has of little value for him.

411. COGNIZANCE

1. Cognizance is perplexity and being devoid of it is dim-sightedness.
2. The most excellent cognizance is the human being's cognizance of himself.
3. Of all the people, the most cognizant of himself is the most fearful of his Lord.
4. The person most cognizant of his age is the one who is not astonished by its events.
5. Cognizance is the light of the heart.
6. Cognizance is the successful attainment of [purification and] the sacred.
7. Cognizance is the evidence of excellence (or nobility).
8. The fruit of cognizance is becoming averse to the evanescent abode.
9. Many a cognizance leads to misguidance.
10. Allah is known by the revocation of resolutions, the undoing of binds and the relieving of hardship and affliction from the one whose intention is sincere.
11. The pinnacle of cognizance is fear [of Allah].
12. The pinnacle of cognizance is for a person to know himself.
13. It is a sufficient cognizance for a person to know himself.
14. The conception of cognizance is through learning knowledge.
15. One whose cognizance is sound, his soul and his endeavour turns away from the evanescent world.
16. The cognizance of a scholar is the devoutness through which Allah is worshipped, through it the human being gains obedience in his lifetime and a beautiful remembrance after his death.
17. The smallest amount of cognizance leads to disinclination towards worldly pleasures (or corruption of one's actions).
18. Meeting the people of cognizance is a means of strengthening the hearts and benefitting of wisdom.
19. One who is cognizant, refrains [from the forbidden].
20. It behoves the one who knows Allah, the Glorified, to desire that which is with Him.
21. One who is cognizant of Allah, the Glorified, will never become wretched.
22. One who relies on personal opinion and analogy in trying to know Allah goes astray and matters become confusing for him.
23. Cognizance of Allah, the Glorified, is the highest cognizance.
24. It behoves the one who is cognizant of Allah, the Glorified, not to make his heart devoid of hope in Him and fear of Him.
25. One who knows Allah believes in his oneness.
26. Whoever knows Allah, his cognizance is complete.

Notes

1. It is possible that the actions are corrupted because the cognizance is only little and thus incomplete.
2. Or: One who knows Allah opts to remain alone.

412. THE COGNIZANT

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Every cognizant one is sorrowful.
2. Every cognizant one is averse [to the temporary pleasures of this world].
3. How can one know others when he is ignorant of himself?!
4. The cognizant one is he who knows his soul and thus frees it and purifies it from all that distances it [from the Truth] and destroys it.
5. The face of the cognizant one is cheerful and smiling while his heart is fearful and sad.

413. GLORY AND THE HONOURED ONE

1. One who is given honour by Allah cannot be humiliated by any king.
2. One who seeks honour through [anyone] other than Allah is abased.
3. One who seeks glory through [anyone] other than Allah is destroyed by [the] glory.
4. One who seeks glory without having any right to it gets humiliated.
5. One who seeks glory through [anything] other than truth, Allah humiliates him with [the] truth.
6. There is no glory except through obedience [to Allah].
7. The honoured is the one who becomes honoured through obedience [to Allah].
8. When you seek glory, then seek it through obedience [to Allah].
9. He whose neighbours are abased is not honoured.
10. Glory is the attainment of [the power to exact] revenge.
11. Every glory that is not endorsed by religion is a humiliation.

Notes

1. Or: One who humiliates his neighbours is not honoured.

414. SECLUSION

1. In seclusion from the worldly people there is accumulation of goodness.
2. One who secludes [from the people] himself remains safe.
3. One who tests [the people who love this world] secludes himself [from them].
4. One who secludes himself, his indifference towards the pleasures of this world becomes strong.
5. Whoever secludes himself, his piety remains safeguarded?
6. One who secludes himself from the people is safe from their evil.
7. How good a worship seclusion is!
8. One who isolates himself from the people preserves his religion.
9. One who isolates himself from the people becomes intimate with Allah, the Glorified.
10. Safety is in solitude.
11. Solitude is the comfort of the worshippers.
12. One who isolates himself is spared from sorrows.
13. Continuous solitude is safer than mingling with the people.
14. Seclusion is the best (or the fortification of) piety.
15. Seclusion is the best trait of the sagacious.

415. RESOLVE

1. Whoever reveals his decision [to others], his judiciousness gets nullified.
2. Whoever resolves to do evil, his arrow returns to him.
3. Do not resolve upon that in which you find no clear guidance.
4. There is no good in [making a] resolution without determination.

Notes

1. Or: There is no good in making a decision without prudence.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

416. ADVERSITY

1. Adversity degrades morals and alienates friends.
2. Adversity is a reproach.
3. Adversity corrupts morals.

417. SOCIAL INTERACTION AND MINGLING

1. Social interaction with people of merits is enlivening for the hearts.
2. Let not your family or those whom you love be the most miserable of people because of you.
3. Do not alienate a person whose separation will harm you.
4. The one who mingles with people is afflicted by the evil associate and the hypocrisy of the enemy.
5. Preserve [the respect of others] and your respect will be preserved.
6. Mix sternness with gentleness, and be gentle as long as gentleness is more befitting.
7. Imbibe your heart with mercy for all the people and kindness towards them, and do not oppress them or be [like] a sword over them.
8. Remember you brother who is absent in the same way that which you would like him to remember you [in your absence] and keep away from what he dislikes; and disregard from him that which you would like him to disregard from you.
9. Loathe from yourself what you loathe from others and like for people what you like for yourself.
10. Reduced mingling preserves religion and relieves one from having to associate with wicked people.
11. Be equitable to people over yourself, your family, your near ones and those from whom you desire something, and be just with both enemy and friend.
12. Be friendly with the one who is friendly with you, accept the excuse of the one who seeks your pardon and do good to the one who wrongs you.
13. Guard well the sanctities [of such things that are sacrosanct] and draw near to the people of magnanimity, for indeed guarding the sanctities [and boundaries] demonstrates an honourable character and drawing near to the magnanimous indicates nobility of purpose.
14. Be merciful to the one who is under you and the one who is above you will be merciful to you; compare his forgetfulness with your forgetfulness and his disobedience with your disobedience to you Lord, and his need of your mercy to your need of the mercy of your Lord.
15. Cling to the people of virtue and piety, and request them not compliment you, for indeed excessive praise brings one close to being deceived [about his true status] and being pleased with it causes the displeasure of Allah.
16. Make your self a gauge between you and the other; love for him what you love for your self, and hate for him what you hate for it, and do good as you would like good to be done to you, and do not oppress just as you would like not to be oppressed.
17. Associate with people in the way that you would like them to associate with you, [by doing this] you will be safe from them and they will be safe from you.
18. Keep away from socializing with evil people for they are like fire - the one who comes in contact with it gets burnt.
19. Keep away from socializing with those who look for the faults (or sins) of people, for indeed even their companion is not safe from them.
20. Be sure to keep away from that which angers your Lord and alienates people from you, for the one who angers his Lord is faced with annihilation and one who alienates people renounces freedom.
21. Be careful to keep away from turning your backs on each other, cutting off ties with each other, and abandoning the enjoining of good and prohibiting of evil [with respect to one another].
22. The most deserving of those whom you love is the one who does not forsake you.
23. The most equitable conduct is for you to deal with people in the way you would like them to deal with you.
24. The most unjust conduct is for you to seek equity from people while not dealing with them in the same way.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

25. The most worthy of those whom you love is he whose benefit is for you and whose harm is for other than you.
26. Verily the best outward appearance [and demeanour] is that which makes you mingle with people and beautifies you among them and restrains their tongues from [speaking ill of] you.
27. Make others incline towards you instead of distancing themselves from you.
28. Man is the son of his time.
29. Through good social interaction, affection lasts.
30. Through good social interaction friendships become intimate.
31. By good social interaction ties (or companionship) last.
32. How evil an associate the spiteful person is!
33. Good social interaction causes affection to endure.
34. Interact with people through their [norms of] etiquette but separate yourself from them in [your] actions.
35. Interact with people in such a way that when you die, they weep over you and when you are absent, they yearn for your company.
36. Interact with people through your tongues and your bodies, but part from them with your hearts and your actions.
37. Many an associate is not a close friend.
38. It is in times of trial that a man is [either] honoured or disgraced.
39. Associate with the people of excellence and you will gain felicity and nobility.
40. The development of the hearts is in socializing with people of intellect.
41. Cutting off [ties with] the ignorant is equivalent to establishing ties with the intelligent.
42. The intelligent person [only] cuts off ties with you after failing to find any other way out.
43. Get closer to the people in their morals and you will be safe from their malice [and evil].
44. Having many acquaintances is a tribulation, and socializing with the people is an ordeal.
45. One whose social interaction increases, his piety (or reliability) decreases.
46. One who mingles with the people is affected by their devices.
47. Whoever mingles with the people, his piety decreases?
48. One whose social interaction is good, his brother's increase.
49. One who deals leniently with people enjoys [and benefits from] their company.
50. One whose being alive is not beneficial to you, then count him among the dead.
51. Be good in your interactions, be patient in difficulties and be equitable when you have power.
52. Be pleased for [other] people with that which pleases you, then you will be a [true] Muslim.

Notes

1. Meaning that he is bound to follow the ways of the people of his time (and this is acceptable as long as it is not against the commandments of Allah)

418. THE LOVER

1. Desires have rent asunder his intellect and killed his heart while his mind is infatuated with them.

419. SEEKING PROTECTION FROM ALLAH

1. Whoever seeks protection from Allah, He saves him.
2. One who seeks protection from Allah is not harmed by Satan.
3. Whoever clings to Allah, his wish is fulfilled [and his goal is achieved].
4. Entrust your soul, in all your affairs, to your Lord, for indeed [by your so doing] you are turning to a secure refuge.
5. Seek protection with Allah in all situations, for indeed you will be clinging to One, Glorified be He, who is a powerful protector.
6. You must seek protection from Allah in all your affairs, for indeed this is a [means of] protection from everything.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

420. PRESERVING ONESELF FROM SIN

1. Preserving oneself from sin is a blessing.
2. One who is inspired with preservation [from sin] is saved from error.
3. Being unable to sin is [also] a form of preservation [against sin].

421. DESTRUCTION AND DAMAGE

1. Sometimes there is destruction is under what is sought.
2. Embarking on acts that lead to [places of] destruction is the symbol of foolishness.
3. Many a person is destroyed after having remained safe [and survived a disaster].

422. EMPATHY

1. One whose empathy (or kind acts) increases, his acquaintances increases.

423. RESPECT

1. One who respects you because of your opulence, belittles you in your [time of] poverty.
2. Never regard anyone as venerable until you discover the level of his cognizance.

424. CHASTITY

1. Chastity preserves the soul and purifies it from vile demerits.
2. Chastity weakens lust.
3. Chastity is renunciation [of worldly pleasures].
4. Chastity is the best (or the root of) magnanimity.
5. Chastity is the best trait.
6. Chastity is the trait of the sagacious.
7. Chastity is the cornerstone of goodness.
8. Restraining oneself from [coveting] that which people possess is chastity and high-mindedness.
9. The people of chastity are the most honourable of the honourables.
10. Through chastity actions become purified.
11. The crown of a man is his chastity and his adornment is his equity.
12. The fruit of chastity is preservation [of oneself from chastisement].
13. The fruit of chastity is contentment.
14. Virtuous chastity is from the traits of the honourable ones.
15. The cause of contentment is chastity.
16. Espouse chastity, for indeed it is a good companion.
17. Espouse chastity and contentment, for whoever does this, his burden of sustenance is lightened.
18. Espouse chastity, for indeed it is the best trait of the honourable ones.
19. You must espouse chastity and trustworthiness, for verily these two are the most honourable of what you can do in secret and the best of what you can practice openly, and the finest of what you can preserve.
20. To the extent of modesty, there is chastity.
21. I am amazed at the one who knows the evil consequences of [forbidden] pleasures, how can he not remain chaste?!
22. Just as you desire, be chaste.
23. One who desires that which he cannot obtain has not adorned himself with chastity.
24. Whoever is granted chastity and contentment, honour becomes his ally.
25. There is no indigence with chastity.
26. Whoever is chaste, his burden [of sin] is reduced and his status becomes great in the sight of Allah.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

27. One whose flanks are chaste, his attributes become good.
28. The chastest among you are the most modest among you.
29. Verily Allah, the Glorified, loves the one who is chaste, modest, pious and satisfied [with His will].

425. WELL-BEING

1. Good health is such that when it lasts, it is disregarded and when it is lost, its value is known.
2. Verily well-being in religion and [in] this world is a great (or beautiful) blessing and a bountiful gift.
3. Well-being is the most pleasant of blessings.
4. There is no life more pleasant than [life] with good health.
5. There is no attire better than well-being.
6. Every well-being is [headed] towards affliction.
7. Well-being is the better of the two attires.
8. Through well-being, life becomes pleasurable.
9. The garment of well-being is the most pleasant of attires.
10. Lasting good health is the most pleasant gift and the best portion.
11. Ask Allah for welfare [and safety] from the lustful temptations and the trials of this world.

426. FORGIVENESS AND PARDON

1. Hastening to forgive is from the morals of the honourable.
2. Forgiveness is the greater of the two virtues.
3. Forgive and you will be supported.
4. Pardon and you will be pardoned.
5. Do good to the one who does evil to you and forgive the one who wrongs you.
6. Forgive the mistake of your friend, [and] your enemy will consider you to be virtuous.
7. Forgive that which angers you for the sake of that which pleases you.
8. Pardon wrongdoings, stave off punishment and overlook that which has not become evident for you.
9. Accept the excuses of people and you will enjoy their brotherhood; meet them with cheerfulness and you will cause their malice [and grudges against you] to die away.
10. Pardon the errors of the magnanimous, for none of them slips but that the Hand of Allah lifts him [back] up.
11. Forgiveness is the best of favours.
12. Forgiveness is the charity of triumph.
13. Forgiveness is the evidence of intelligence.
14. Forgiveness is the symbol of nobility.
15. Forgiveness is the crown of high morals.
16. Many a sin is such that the [appropriate] degree of punishment for it is informing the sinner of it.
17. Do not persist in that [action] which is followed by sin.
18. Forgiveness despite [having the] power [to exact revenge] is a shield from the punishment of Allah, the Glorified.
19. When you have been wronged, forgive.
20. Through forgiveness [of others] divine mercy is invoked.
21. Overlook despite having power [to punish] and do good while possessing authority, [for by this] your mastery will become complete.
22. Overlook missteps and pardon mistakes, [for by this] your station will be elevated.
23. Cover up offences with forgiveness, especially for those who possess magnanimity and social standing.
24. Feign heedlessness [about the mistakes of others] and your affair will be praised.
25. Reward goodness and overlook offence, as long as it is not a breach in religion or an undermining of the authority of Islam.
26. Adopt [the policy of] excusing the people and do not extend your hand to that which is disagreeable to anyone of them.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

27. Do away with revenge, for indeed it is from the worst actions of the powerful, and he who raises himself above the evil of reprisals has taken hold of the accumulation of merits.
28. It is when one possesses complete authority that the virtue of forgiveness becomes manifest.
29. Lack of forgiveness is the ugliest of flaws and rushing to exact revenge is the gravest of sins.
30. Accepting the excuse of a wrongdoer is from the acts that bring honour and the [is] the most excellent of traits.
31. Victory is a sufficient intercessor for the sinner.
32. Be graciously forgiving when you become powerful and act justly when you are in authority.
33. Be forgiving when you are powerful, generous in your affluence and altruistic despite your poverty, then virtue will become perfected for you (or virtues will become perfected for you).
34. One who forgives wrongdoings has taken hold of the accumulation of merits.
35. One who does not favour [others] with forgiveness, wrongs [them] through vengeance.
36. Whoever does not accept repentance, his sin is great.
37. Overlooking [another's] offence is part of religion.
38. How good is forgiveness while having ability [to exact revenge]!
39. He who scolds [someone] for a sin has not forgiven it.
40. Hastening in forgiving the sins [of others] is from the lofty morals of the honourable ones.
41. Never feel regret for forgiving and never be gladdened by punishing.
42. Do not hasten the punishment for a sin and leave room between the two (i.e. the sin and punishment) for forgiveness, through this you will gain recompense and reward.
43. There is no clemency like pardon.
44. There is nothing better than the forgiveness of a powerful person.
45. A wrongdoer can never be faced with anything better than being shown forgiveness.
46. It pleases me for a person to forgive the one who oppresses him, to establish ties with the one who cuts him off, to give the one who deprives him and to respond to evil with goodness.
47. Give people your forgiveness and pardon just as you would like Allah, the Glorified, to grant [it] to you, and never regret showing forgiveness [to others].
48. Honour the one who loves you and pardon your enemy, [for by this] virtue will become complete for you.
49. The best act of a person in power is to forgive.
50. Of all people, the most behaving of [granting] forgiveness is the one who has the greatest power to punish.
51. The most deserving of [showing] mercy is the one who [himself] is in need of it.
52. Better than seeking your right is to forgive [and forego] it.
53. The best of high morals is the forgiveness of the powerful and the generosity of the poor.
54. The best forgiveness is that which is shown despite having power [to exact revenge].
55. From the people, the one who is most cognizant of Allah is the one who is most forgiving to the people, even if he does not find them having any excuse.
56. Verily, confronting evil with good and the covering up wrongs with forgiveness are from the best virtues and the most praiseworthy qualities.
57. Verily, he who gives to the one who deprives him, establishes ties with the one who cuts him off and forgives the one who oppresses him, will find in Allah, the Glorified, a Supporter and a Helper.
58. Forgiveness is a virtue.
59. Forgiveness is the best good deed.
60. Forgiveness is the ornament of power.
61. Forgiveness brings about eminence.
62. Forgiveness is the alms-tax of power.
63. Forgiveness is the best of favours.
64. Forgiveness is the best revenge.
65. Pardoning means that a person should forgive that which is done to wrong him and show forbearance with that which angers him.
66. Pardoning is the best of traits.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

67. Pardon that which you are unaware of for what you are aware of, and what you are ignorant of for what you know.
68. When a wrong is done to you, then forgive.
69. The person most deserving of having his request granted is one who seeks forgiveness.
70. Be careful not to hasten towards punishment, for indeed this is detestable in the sight of Allah and brings [unwanted] changes [and removal of blessings] closer.

Notes

1. It is possible that this is an instruction of the Imam ('a) to those given the task of collecting the zakāt from the people.
2. A possible meaning for this would be: When a person does some bad to you and some good, then forgive his bad for the sake of the good that he has done to you.

427. OUTCOMES

1. For every matter there is an outcome, [be it] sweet or bitter.
2. One who expects [and considers] the outcomes remains safe.
3. One who considers the outcomes remains safe.
4. One who considers the outcomes remains safe from calamities.
5. One who is careful of the outcomes is safe from peril [and destruction].
6. One who awaits a [positive] outcome is patient.
7. One who is careful of the outcomes remains safe from calamities.
8. When you endeavour to act upon a matter, then eschew the blameworthy outcomes in it.
9. Be careful of the outcomes and you will be saved from destruction.
10. In the outcomes [of matters] there is [either] a curer or a comforter.
11. The basis of [the success of] outcomes is that which results in the pleasure of Allah, the Glorified.

428. FILIAL IMPIETY

1. Disregarding the rights [of your parents] is from [the acts of] filial impiety.

429. THE INTELLECT

1. The intellect is an honourable nobility that does not wear away.
2. The intellect is an inborn quality that increases through knowledge and experience.
3. The intellect and knowledge are joined together in one linkage, they neither separate nor do they differ.
4. The intellect is the greatest of riches and the highest honour in [both] the Hereafter and this world.
5. The intellect is the most beautiful adornment and knowledge is the most honourable merit.
6. The intellect is the root of knowledge and the herald of understanding.
7. Intelligence is an advantage, knowledge is an elevation and patience is a defence [and a means of repelling hardships].
8. The intellect is the close friend of a believer, knowledge is his vizier, patience is the commander of his army and action is his overseer.
9. The intellect is the leader of the army of the Most Merciful and vain desire is the chief of the army of Satan, and the soul is pulled back and forth between them, so whichever of them is victorious, it (i.e. the soul) is in its domain.
10. Intellect and lust are opposites; the supporter of the intellect is knowledge and the adorning of lust is vain desire, and the soul is contended for between the two, so whichever is triumphant, it is on its side.
11. Intelligence is for you to be moderate and not indulge in extravagance, to promise and not to break your promise, and to be forbearing when you get angry.
12. Intelligence is for you to speak [only] of what you know and to act upon what you say.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

13. The intellect guides and saves whereas ignorance misleads and destroys.
14. The intellect is a praiseworthy friend.
15. Seek right guidance from the intellect and oppose vain desire, [by this] you will gain success.
16. Fetter your intellect, control your affair, struggle with your [lower] self, and exert your effort in working for the Hereafter.
17. Where are the intellects that light up (or that accompany) the lamps of guidance?
18. The best intellect is [that which leads one to] right guidance.
19. The best of blessings is the intellect.
20. The beginning of intelligence is being friendly [with the people].
21. The best intelligence is [that which leads to] good etiquette.
22. The best intelligence is keeping away from idle sport.
23. The best intelligence is for a person to know his self, for the one who knows his self becomes wise and the one who fails to know it goes astray.
24. The best intelligence is taking lesson [from the past], the best prudence is precaution and the biggest foolishness is being deceived [by worldly allures].
25. The best portion of a person is his intellect, if he gets humiliated it restores his honour, if he falls it raises him, if he goes astray it guides him and if he talks it directs him.
26. Verily Allah, the Glorified, loves the sound intellect and the upright action.
27. Verily the one who has been bestowed with a sound intellect and upright action by Allah has indeed been granted with a manifest blessing and a great bounty.
28. Intelligence is an adornment and foolishness is a disgrace.
29. Intelligence is closeness, foolishness is estrangement.
30. Intelligence is a remedy, foolishness is misery.
31. Intellects are gifts, etiquettes are earned.
32. The intellect is the excellence of human beings.
33. The intellect is the messenger of the truth.
34. The intellect is a friend that has been cut-off.
35. The intellect is a solver of every issue.
36. The intellect is not deceived.
37. The intellect is the herald of comprehension.
38. The intellect is the strongest foundation.
39. Intellect is the best thing that is hoped for.
40. Intelligence improves deliberation.
41. The intellect is the spring of goodness.
42. Intelligence is the preservation of [what is learnt through] experiences.
43. The intellect is the best ornament.
44. The intellect necessitates caution.
45. Intellect is the vehicle of knowledge.
46. The intellect is a sharp [cutting] sword.
47. Intellect is the most honourable merit.
48. The intellect is [like] a new attire that does not get worn out.
49. The intellect frees [one] from evil and enjoins [one to do] good.
50. The intellect is an intimate friend that is relied on in every situation.
51. The intellect is a tree whose fruits are generosity and modesty.
52. The intellect is an adornment for the one who is endowed with it.
53. The intellect gives one a sense of familiarity when he is away from his homeland.
54. The intellect elevates one to the lofty stations [in Paradise].
55. Verily, when I find a quality from the good qualities firmly ingrained in a person, I judge him according to it, and I forgive him for not possessing other than it; but I never exonerate him for not possessing intelligence or for lacking religion, because separation from religion is departure from security, and life is not wholesome with fear, and lack of intellect is lack of life, and the dead are not interacted with.
56. Verily you are gauged by your intellect, so develop it with knowledge.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

57. Intellect is nothing but eschewing sin, considering the consequences [of one's actions] and being [resolute and] prudent.
58. The bane of intellect is self-conceit.
59. When the intellect is complete, speech decreases.
60. When the intellect becomes complete, lust diminishes.
61. It is through the intellect that the deepest wisdom is brought out.
62. Through the intellect, [acts of goodness and] virtues are attained.
63. Through the intellect, the condition of the creatures is set right.
64. Through abundant intellect, forbearance becomes abundant.
65. Through the intellects, the pinnacle of sciences (or matters) is attained.
66. By leaving that which does not concern you, your intellect becomes complete.
67. Perfection of the soul is [attained] through the intellect.
68. It is through the intellect that every affair is set aright.
69. The completion of the intellect (or of action) is in its perfection.
70. The purification of a man is through his intellect.
71. The fruit of intellect is steadfastness [and uprightness].
72. The fruit of intellect is adherence to the truth.
73. The fruit of intellect is association with the virtuous.
74. The fruit of intellect is working for salvation.
75. The fruit of intellect is being affable with the people.
76. The fruit of intellect is honesty.
77. The fruit of intellect is aversion to this world and subdual of vain desire.
78. There are three things by which the intellects of people are tested: wealth, authority and adversity.
79. Three things show the intelligence of their lords: the messenger, the message and the gift.
80. A strong intellect is the beauty of the outward and inward facets [of a human being].
81. A good intellect is the best pathfinder.
82. The [highest] limit of the intellect is considering the consequences [of actions] and being pleased with what has been decreed [by Allah].
83. It is forbidden upon every intellect that is shackled by (or sick with) lust to benefit from wisdom.
84. The peak of intellect is separation from the perishing and attachment to the everlasting.
85. Preservation of the intellect is through opposing vain desire and turning away from this world.
86. The best of divine gifts [to human beings] is the intellect.
87. The indication of a person's intellect is his speech.
88. The departure [and loss] of intellect is between vain desire and lust.
89. Kindle your intellect with etiquette just as you kindle fire with firewood.
90. The staidness of the intellect is put to the test in times of happiness and sadness.
91. A heightened intellect saves [one from perdition].
92. There are six situations in which the intellects of people are tested: association, transaction, authority, isolation, affluence and poverty.
93. There are six things that assay the intellects of people: forbearance when angry, patience when frightened, carefulness in obeying Allah in every situation, friendliness in dealing with others and reduced arguing [and quarrelling].
94. The rectitude of the intellect is [in] good etiquette.
95. The friend of every person is his intellect and his enemy is his ignorance.
96. Straying of the intellect distances one from right guidance and corrupts his Hereafter.
97. The straying of the intellect is the most serious deviation, and the abasement (or error) of ignorance is the greatest abasement (or error).
98. You must develop your intellect, for there is no wealth more profitable than it.
99. In times of trial (or perplexity) the [level of] intellects of the people are revealed.
100. In times of impromptu speech, the intellects of people are tested.
101. When covetousness and false hopes deceive, the minds of the ignorant are beguiled and the intellects of people are tested.
102. The symbol of intellect is being affable with the people.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

103. The intellect of a person is his order, his etiquette is his foundation, his honesty is his leader and his gratitude is his perfection.
104. The intellects of the erudite scholars are in the points of their pens.
105. The highest distinction of a person is the excellence of his intellect.
106. The highest degree of intelligence is admitting to [one's] ignorance.
107. The intrinsic nature of the intellect impels it to employ justice.
108. The intrinsic nature of the intellect rejects dispraised action.
109. The mind that is sick with anger and lust does not benefit from wisdom.
110. The veil of flaws is the intellect.
111. Lack of intellect is wretchedness.
112. Corruption of the intellect is [in] being deluded by deceptions.
113. The excellence of the intellect is [in] indifference towards [the pleasures of] this world.
114. At times [relying on] the intellect alone may lead [one] astray.
115. How many a lowly person has been made venerable by his intellect.
116. Many a mind has been made subservient by a commanding desire.
117. Intelligence is sufficient as wealth.
118. It is enough of intelligence for a person to be moderate in his pursuits.
119. It suffices for your intellect to distinguish for you right guidance from error.
120. Be quick to respond to your intellect and delay in responding to your vain desire.
121. Whenever the intellect of a person increases, his faith in divine decree becomes stronger and he takes the changing events [that bring worldly loss to him] lightly.
122. The gain of the intellect is refraining from harming others.
123. The manner of action points to the measure of intelligence, so make good choices for it and be more precautionary with regards to it.
124. The intellect acquires consideration and precaution whereas ignorance earns negligence and deception.
125. The perfection of a person is his intellect and his value is his benevolence.
126. The perfection of a human being is his intellect.
127. Everything has a pinnacle, and the pinnacle of a person is his intellect.
128. For everything there is an alms-tax and the alms-tax of intelligence is tolerating the ignorant ones.
129. The intellect will never be adorned until it is complemented by forbearance.
130. If the intellect was sound, every person would take advantage of [every moment of] his time.
131. One who seeks the support of the intellect is supported by it.
132. Whoever seeks assistance from the intellect, it shows him the right direction.
133. One whose intellect is weak has bad oratory.
134. Do not have any expectations from one who has no intellect.
135. One whose intellect is complete scorns lustful desires.
136. One of the most affirming [and effective] means of intelligence is showing compassion to the ignorant ones.
137. From the most perfect of blessings is abundance of intellect.
138. Keeping away from wastefulness and good management [skills] are from [the fruits of] intelligence.
139. Adorning oneself with forbearance (or knowledge) is from the best intelligence.
140. The rectitude of the creation is [achieved through] the intellect.
141. The intellect of every person is deduced by what passes upon his tongue.
142. The intellect of a man is indicated by his good speech and the purity of his roots is evinced by his beautiful actions.
143. The intellect of a man is evinced by his increased dignity and his virtuous tolerance, and his honourable lineage is attested to by his beautiful actions.
144. One whose intellect overpowers his vain desire is successful.
145. One whose vain desire overpowers his intellect is disgraced.
146. One who loses his wits is not bypassed by abasement.
147. One who is held back by intellect is driven forward by ignorance.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

148. Nothing is purified in the sight of Allah, the Glorified, except the cognizant mind and the disinclined soul [from the pleasures of this world].
149. There is nothing better than an intellect with knowledge, and knowledge with forbearance, and forbearance with power [to punish].
150. The intellect of a man is indicated by his adorning himself with chastity and contentment.
151. There is no intelligence like feigning ignorance [when in the company of those who lack etiquette].
152. Intellect and vain desire do not go together.
153. There is no possession more beneficial than intellect.
154. There is no beauty more exquisite than intellect.
155. There is no blessing better than intellect.
156. The intellect does not beguile one who takes its advice.
157. There is no good in an intellect that is not accompanied by forbearance.
158. There is no ailment more debilitating than lack of intellect.
159. He who has no intellect has no religion.
160. One who loses [the friendship of] an intelligent one shows the weakness of his [own] intellect.
161. One who puts his intellect before his vain desire, his undertakings become good.
162. One who masters his intellect is indeed wise.
163. One who considers [and learns from the past] with his intellect, perceives.
164. One whose intellect becomes stronger takes more lessons [from the past].
165. Accumulating provisions for the Day of Return is from intelligence.
166. One of the signs of intelligence is speaking what is right.
167. Acting on the [established] practice of justice is from the signs of intelligence.
168. Nothing embellishes virtues like the intellect.
169. Allah, the Glorified, has not apportioned anything among his servants better than intellect.
170. Allah, the Glorified, has only entrusted man with an intellect so that it may one day deliver him.
171. The basis of [the rightness of] an affair is the intellect.
172. With intellect, forbearance [and judiciousness] becomes abundant.
173. The distinguishing feature of a man is his intellect and his beauty is his magnanimity.
174. Whoever is incapable of using his own present intellect, then he is more helpless with regards to the far-off intelligence [of others] and the one who is absent from him is more useless [to him].

430. THE INTELLIGENT

1. The intelligent person is one who fetters his tongue.
2. The intelligent person is one who covers up sins with forgiveness.
3. The intelligent person is one who forsakes his lust and sells his world for his Hereafter.
4. The intelligent person does not speak except when he needs to or in order to present his case.
5. The intelligent person is one who abstains from sins and keeps himself free from faults.
6. The intelligent person is one who fetters his tongue except from the remembrance [and extolment] of Allah.
7. The intelligent person is one who opposes his vain desire in obedience to his Lord.
8. The intelligent person is one who performs acts of kindness and puts his effort in its correct place.
9. When the intelligent one is quiet, he reflects and when he speaks, he remembers [and extols Allah] and when he observes, he takes lesson.
10. The intelligent person is one who suspects his [own] opinion and does not trust everything that his self makes decorous for him.
11. The intelligent person is one who abstains from [the pleasures of] the lowly, perishing world and desires the sublime, everlasting, lofty Paradise.
12. The intelligent person is one who puts things in their right places, and the ignorant one does the opposite of this.
13. The intelligent person acts when he knows and when he acts, he does so sincerely, and when he becomes sincere, he secludes himself [from others].
14. The intelligent person is one who guards his tongue from backbiting.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

15. The intelligent person strives in his work and shortens his hopes.
16. The intelligent person is one who overcomes his vain desire and does not sell his Hereafter for his [temporary life in this] world.
17. The intelligent one is neither pushed to the extreme by violence nor is he hampered by weakness.
18. The intelligent person is one who controls himself when he gets angry, when he desires and when he is frightened.
19. The intelligent person charges himself with performing that which is obligatory upon him and he does not charge himself with seeking that which is due to him.
20. The intelligent person is one who does not waste his [time and] energy in that which does not benefit him, and does not [strive to] acquire that which will not accompany him [after his death].
21. The intelligent person is one who overpowers his contending vain desires.
22. The intelligent person is one who submits to the decree [of Allah] and acts with judiciousness [and determination].
23. The intelligent person is one who subdues his vain desire with his intellect.
24. Be rational and you will discern.
25. Indeed, the intelligent person is one who considers the different [expressed] opinions with correct reasoning and considers the consequences [of matters].
26. The most intelligent of you is the most submissive of you.
27. The most intelligent person is one who follows the wise people.
28. When you make an indirect reference to an intelligent person then you have tormented him with reproof.
29. The most felicitous of people is the intelligent one.
30. The most intelligent of people is the most modest of them.
31. The most intelligent person is the virtuous, fearful one.
32. The most intelligent of people is the one who forgives [and accepts the excuses of] others the most.
33. The most intelligent of people is the farthest of them from all vile things.
34. The most intelligent of people is the most submissive of them to Allah, the Glorified.
35. The most intelligent of people is the closest of them to Allah.
36. The most intelligent of people is one who sees his own fault and is blind to the fault of others.
37. The most intelligent of people is the one who does not go beyond silence in punishing the ignorant.
38. The most intelligent of people is the best of them in estimating his livelihood and the most serious of them in endeavouring to improve his Hereafter.
39. The most intelligent of people is one whose seriousness overpowers his frivolity and who overcomes his vain desire with his intellect.
40. The most intelligent of people is one who is humbled in front of the truth so he submits himself to it, and is honoured by the truth so he does not undermine its establishment and acting upon it with goodness.
41. The most intelligent of people is the one who is most considering of the consequences [of actions].
42. Verily the intelligent one is not beguiled by covetousness.
43. Verily the intelligent person is one whose intellect is [employed] in right guidance and whose view is in [the process of development and] growth, that is why his view is correct and his action praiseworthy.
44. Indeed, the intelligent one learns through discipline while the beasts are not trained except by beating.
45. Verily the intelligent person is one who looks in his today for his tomorrow, and strives to unshackle his soul, and works for that which must come to pass and which cannot be escaped.
46. Verily it behoves the intelligent one to be cautious of death in this world, and he should make good preparations before he arrives at the abode wherein one wishes for death but does not find it.
47. The practice of those who possess intellect and understanding is turning towards the permanent abode, turning away from the evanescent abode and being desirous of the Garden of Paradise.
48. It behoves the intelligent one to make arrangements for his Hereafter and to develop [and build] the abode of his permanent residence.
49. The intelligent one likes the company of those who are like him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

50. A person is the friend of what he understands.
51. The intelligent one is the enemy of his delectation.
52. The intelligent person is one who fetters his tongue.
53. The intelligent one seeks perfection, the ignorant one seeks wealth.
54. The intelligent one puts his self down and as a result he gets elevated.
55. The intelligent one is grieved, sorrowful.
56. The intelligent person is one who safeguards his affair.
57. Insinuation is the severest punishment for the intelligent one.
58. The intelligent person is one who is admonished by experiences.
59. The intelligent person is one who annihilates his lust.
60. The intelligent person is one who spreads his generosity.
61. The intelligent one relies on his [hard] work, [while] the ignorant one relies on his aspiration.
62. The intelligent person is one who takes a lesson from [the experiences of] others.
63. The intelligent person is one whose words are affirmed by his actions.
64. The intelligent person is one who stops at what he knows.
65. The intelligent person is one who renounces that which the ignorant one desires.
66. Indeed only he is intelligent who is admonished by experiences.
67. Only he is intelligent who takes out the grudges [from his heart].
68. As the intelligent one grows older, his intellect grows younger.
69. Hinting at [and making indirect references to] the error of the intelligent person is one of the most agonizing punishments for him.
70. The wealth of an intelligent person is in his knowledge and his action.
71. Love of knowledge, virtuous forbearance and adhering to the right are from the merits of the people of reason and understanding.
72. It is a right that is due on the intelligent one to work for the Hereafter and to seek more provisions [for it].
73. It is a right upon the intelligent one to vanquish his vain desire before his adversary.
74. The reign of the intelligent one is like the relative who longs to unite [with his dear ones].
75. The one who possesses intellect is not known except by [his] tolerance, temperance and kindness.
76. The desire of an intelligent person is in wisdom and the ambition of an ignorant person is in foolishness.
77. The lapse of an intelligent person is dangerous.
78. The lapse of an intelligent person is a crushing blow.
79. The virtues of an intelligent ruler are spread far and wide.
80. The [distinguishing] quality of the people of intellect is [their] lack of lust and negligence.
81. The quality of those who possess intellect and understanding is [their] turning towards the Eternal Abode, turning away from the evanescent abode, and yearning for the Garden of Paradise.
82. The chest of an intelligent person is the strongbox of his secret.
83. The conjecture of an intelligent person is more correct than the certitude of an ignorant person.
84. The enmity of an intelligent person is better than the friendship of an ignorant one.
85. The sufficiency of an intelligent person is through his knowledge.
86. The sufficiency of an intelligent person is through his wisdom and his honour is through his contentment.
87. The ugly act of an intelligent person is better than the beautiful act of an ignorant person.
88. Every intelligent person is sorrowful (or sad).
89. Be intelligent in the affairs of your religion and simple in your worldly affairs.
90. The speech of the intelligent is a nourishment [for the soul] and the reply of the ignorant is [nothing better than] silence.
91. For the intelligent one, there is goodness in every action [he does].
92. For the intelligent one, there is nobility in every word [he speaks].
93. For the intelligent one, in every action there is self-discipline.
94. It is not for the intelligent one to move out [of his home] except for three things: to do something to improve his Hereafter, or to earn his livelihood, or to enjoy what is not forbidden.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

95. He who is distracted by idle sport and seeks pleasure in amusement and song, has no intelligence.
96. One who has intelligence, comprehends.
97. One who has intelligence remains chaste [and abstains from the forbidden].
98. One who has intelligence seeks pardon [for the wrong he does].
99. One who has intelligence is kind [and tolerant].
100. One who has intelligence is content.
101. One who has intelligence remains silent [until there is a need to speak].
102. One who does not use intellect is abased, and one who is abased is not revered.
103. One who has intelligence takes more lessons [from the past].
104. One whose intellect is less, his jesting is increased.
105. One who has intelligence takes lesson from his past and takes precaution for his soul.
106. One whose intellect prevails over his lust and his forbearance [overcomes] his anger, then he is worthy of [being deemed as having] good conduct.
107. One who has intelligence awakens from his negligence, prepares for his journey and maintains [and develops] his abode of [permanent] residence.
108. One whose intellect does not have the greatest control over him does not benefit from [any] advice.
109. One who does not have an intellect to adorn him, does not become noble.
110. One whose intellect is not complete, his evils are not safeguarded against.
111. It is from the intelligence of a man that he not speak about all that he knows.
112. It is from the rights of the intelligent person to vanquish his vain desire before his adversary.
113. It is from the right of the intelligent person to count his evil action and his ugly conduct as being from the wretchedness of his circumstance and his misfortune.
114. From the perfection of your intellect is your reliance on your intellect.
115. One who lengthens his aspirations is not intelligent.
116. An intelligent person does not lie and a believer does not fornicate.
117. The magnanimity of an intelligent person is his religion and his distinction is his etiquette.
118. Half of the intelligent one is tolerance and [the other] half is feigning negligence [when encountering the bad behaviour of the ignorant].
119. The intelligent person is never found [to be] beguiled.
120. There is none more courageous than the intelligent one.
121. He who is overcome by anger and lust should not be counted as an intelligent person.
122. It behoves the intelligent person not to remain aloof from the obedience of Allah and the struggle against his [lower] self, in every situation.
123. It behoves the intelligent person to work for the Hereafter and try to increase his provisions before he passes away and is lowered into his grave.
124. It behoves the intelligent one to prepare provisions for his Hereafter and to maintain [and develop] the abode of his [permanent] residence.
125. It behoves the intelligent person to earn praise through his wealth and to preserve himself from asking others.
126. It behoves an intelligent person to address an ignorant one like a doctor addresses a sick patient.
127. It behoves the intelligent person to increase his association with the scholars and the virtuous ones, and to keep away from the company of the evil and wicked ones.
128. It behoves the intelligent one to protect himself from the intoxication of wealth, the intoxication of power, the intoxication of knowledge, the intoxication of praise and the intoxication of youth, for each of these have foul odours that take away intelligence and reduces dignity.
129. It behoves the intelligent person not to be harsh when he teaches, and not to scorn [others] when he gains knowledge.
130. The intellect of every person is manifested by that which is spoken by his tongue.
131. The intellect of every person is indicated by his tongue, and his merit is evinced by his diction.
132. I am amused by a man whose intellect is seen as an extension of his tongue, while his tongue is not seen as an extension of his intellect.
133. Follow the intelligent one and you will benefit.
134. At times the intelligent person becomes blind to what is right.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

431. THE CAUSE AND THE EFFECTS

1. The branches will surely return to their roots, and the effects to their causes, and the particulars to their universals.

432. THE CELESTIAL REALM

1. He ('a) was asked about the [beings in the] celestial realm, so he replied: [They are] forms devoid of matter, above [the need for physical] strength and ability; divine light is illuminated upon them so they shine and it rises upon them so they gleam; then He casts in their identities His likeness, thus He manifests His actions through them. He created the human being with an articulating soul, [such that] if he purifies it with knowledge and action, it resembles the essences of its primal causes, and when its demeanour is moderate and it disassociates the contraries then it becomes associated with the seven strong [heavens].

433. KNOWLEDGE

1. Knowledge guides [one] to the truth.
2. Knowledge is the lamp of the intellect and the fountain of excellence.
3. Knowledge is the killer of ignorance and the earner of nobility.
4. Knowledge without action is a plague.
5. Knowledge is a great treasure that does not get exhausted.
6. Knowledge is one of the two lives.
7. Knowledge is the better of the two intimate companions.
8. Knowledge is the better of the two beauties.
9. Knowledge about Allah is the better of the two types of knowledge.
10. Knowledge is an honourable heritage and a universal blessing.
11. Knowledge saves [one] from being entangled in perplexity.
12. Knowledge is evidence of intellect, so the one who knows has intelligence.
13. Knowledge is the enlivener of the soul, the illuminator of the intellect and the annihilator of ignorance.
14. Knowledge is the fruit of wisdom and rightness is from its branches.
15. Knowledge is the greatest honour for the one who has no [honourable] past.
16. Knowledge is greater than can be encompassed [in its totality], so take the best from every [branch of] knowledge.
17. Knowledge is a governor while wealth is governed.
18. Knowledge guides you towards that which Allah has commanded you to do and renunciation of worldly pleasures makes the path to it easier for you.
19. Knowledge is better than wealth; knowledge guards you while you guard wealth.
20. Knowledge is linked to action, so one who knows, acts.
21. Knowledge calls out to action, so if it responds to it [then it stays] otherwise it departs.
22. Knowledge guides you and action takes you to the goal.
23. Knowledge is the first guide and cognizance is the final end.
24. Knowledge is of two types: the intuitive and the learnt; the intuitive knowledge is of no benefit if there is no learnt knowledge [accompanying it].
25. Know, then speak.
26. Seek knowledge and you will increase in knowledge.
27. Acquire knowledge, for indeed if you are wealthy it will adorn you and if you are poor it will provide for you.
28. Seek knowledge and you will be rightly guided.
29. Acquire knowledge and it will earn you life.
30. Draw water from the clear spring which has been cleansed of all impurity.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

31. Seek knowledge and you will be known for it, act upon it and you will become from those who are worthy of [possessing] it.
32. Indeed, the one who does not know should never be ashamed to learn, for the value of every person is [measured by] what he knows.
33. Indeed, the one who is asked about that which he does not know should never consider it demeaning to say "I don't know".
34. The most useful knowledge is that which is acted upon.
35. The best knowledge is that which is accompanied by action.
36. The most honourable knowledge is that which is manifested in the organs and limbs.
37. The lowliest knowledge is that which stops at the tongue [and is not acted upon].
38. The most victorious of all people is he who overpowers his vain desire with his knowledge.
39. The most important knowledge for you is that without which [your good] action is not accepted.
40. The most obligatory knowledge for you [to acquire] is that which you are responsible for acting upon.
41. The most necessary knowledge for you is that which guides you to rectitude of your religion and separates you from its corruption.
42. The knowledge with the most praiseworthy end is that which increases your [good] actions in this world and draws you nearer [to the mercy of Allah] in the Hereafter.
43. Verily the best of knowledge is [that which leads to] tranquillity and forbearance.
44. Indeed fire is not diminished by what is taken from it but is extinguished when it does not find firewood; similarly, knowledge is not depleted by being acquired but the miserliness of those who possess it is the cause of its absence.
45. Verily Allah, the Glorified, bestows wealth to the one whom He loves and the one whom He hates, but He does not grant knowledge except to the one whom He loves.
46. Verily knowledge guides, directs and saves while ignorance misguides, misdirects and destroys.
47. Knowledge rescues.
48. Knowledge is through understanding.
49. Knowledge is a treasure.
50. Knowledge is honour, obedience is [a] refuge.
51. Knowledge is a guide.
52. Knowledge saves you, ignorance destroys you.
53. Knowledge is loftiness, ignorance is misguidance.
54. Knowledge is life, faith is salvation.
55. Knowledge makes one lofty, ignorance misguides.
56. Knowledge is a refuge.
57. Knowledge is through action.
58. Knowledge is the annihilator of ignorance.
59. Knowledge is the adornment of distinction [and noble descent].
60. Knowledge is the leader of forbearance.
61. Knowledge is the most excellent honour.
62. Knowledge is the lamp of the intellect.
63. Knowledge is the best guide.
64. Knowledge is the most sublime provision.
65. Knowledge is the greatest treasure.
66. Knowledge is life and a cure [for the maladies of the heart].
67. Knowledge is a veil [that protects one] from adversities.
68. Knowledge is the highest success.
69. Knowledge is the best acquisition.
70. Knowledge is the riding mount of forbearance.
71. Knowledge is the root of every good.
72. Knowledge is the symbol of intellect.
73. Knowledge is the fecundation of cognizance.
74. Knowledge aids [and strengthens] reflection.
75. Knowledge is indeed a good guide.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

76. Knowledge is the most excellent (or honourable) guidance.
77. Sciences are the recreation of the men of erudition.
78. Knowledge is the root of forbearance.
79. Knowledge is the killer of ignorance.
80. Knowledge is the herald of comprehension.
81. Knowledge does not end.
82. Knowledge is abundant but action is scarce.
83. Knowledge is a great treasure that does not get exhausted.
84. Knowledge is a [means of] right guidance for the one who acts upon it.
85. All of knowledge is a proof [against its possessor] except what is acted upon.
86. Knowledge is a beauty that does not remain concealed and a relation that does not abandon you (or that is not hidden).
87. Knowledge is the adornment of the wealthy and the wealth of the poor.
88. Indeed the only thing that has made people disinclined to seeking knowledge is the frequency with which they observe that only a few people act upon what they know.
89. The bane of knowledge is to forsake acting upon it.
90. When you hear knowledge then treat it seriously and do not taint it with jesting, thereby making the hearts spit it out.
91. When you want to benefit from knowledge then act upon it and increase in your contemplation about its meanings, [for through this] it will be retained by the hearts.
92. When the knowledge of a person increases, his etiquette improves and his awe for his Lord increases.
93. Through knowledge, wisdom is recognized.
94. Through knowledge, there is life.
95. Through knowledge, the crooked is straightened.
96. Sharing knowledge [with those who deserve] is the alms-tax of knowledge.
97. Through knowledge, the station of forbearance is attained.
98. The completeness of knowledge is [in] its application.
99. The completeness of knowledge is [in] acting according to it.
100. The one who forsakes acting on [his] knowledge is not certain of getting reward for his action.
101. The fruit of knowledge is cognizance of Allah.
102. The fruit of knowledge is worship.
103. The fruit of knowledge is acting upon it.
104. The fruit of knowledge is working for [a blissful] life [in the Hereafter].
105. The fruit of knowledge is sincerity of action.
106. The wealth of knowledge saves and preserves.
107. The beauty of knowledge is [in] its dissemination, its fruit is [in] acting upon it, and its preservation is [in] placing it with those who are worthy of it.
108. The best of knowledge is that which gives benefit.
109. The best of all knowledge is that which reforms you.
110. The best knowledge is that which is accompanied by action.
111. The best of knowledge is that by which you reform your right guidance, and the worst of it is that by which you corrupt your Hereafter.
112. Take from every knowledge the best of it, for indeed the bee partakes from the most beautiful of every flower, so two precious substances are produced from it: in one of them is a cure for the people (i.e. honey), and the other is a means of illumination (i.e. wax).
113. The cornerstone of [all] merits is knowledge.
114. Many a knowledge may lead to your misguidance.
115. The alms-tax of knowledge is its dissemination.
116. The alms-tax of knowledge is granting it to the one who deserves it and exerting the self to act upon it.
117. The adornment of knowledge is forbearance.
118. The cause of fear [of Allah] is knowledge.
119. Ask about that which you must know and cannot be excused for being ignorant about.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

120. The worst knowledge is that by which you corrupt your right guidance.
121. The worst knowledge is knowledge that is not action upon.
122. There are two things the ends of which can never be reached: knowledge and intellect.
123. The disgrace of knowledge is boasting.
124. You must acquire knowledge, for indeed it is an honourable heritage.
125. The knowledge of a hypocrite is [only] on his tongue.
126. The knowledge of a believer is [manifested] in his action.
127. Knowledge without action is like trees without fruit.
128. Knowledge without action is like a bow without a bowstring.
129. Knowledge that is not useful is like a medicine that does not cure.
130. Knowledge that does not reform you is misguidance and wealth that does not benefit you is a curse.
131. Knowledge without action is a proof of Allah against His servant.
132. The goal of knowledge is good action.
133. The utmost goal of knowledge is fear of [the displeasure of] Allah, the Glorified.
134. The end goal of knowledge is tranquillity and forbearance.
135. The excellence of knowledge is [in] acting upon it.
136. Saying 'I don't know' is half of knowledge.
137. Little knowledge accompanied with action is better than a lot of it without action.
138. Knowledge cuts off the excuse of those who offer [many] excuses.
139. All knowledge that is not supported by the intellect is misguidance.
140. Everything diminishes when it is expended except knowledge.
141. Everything becomes precious when it becomes less (or scarce) except knowledge, for indeed it gains value when it abounds.
142. Every vessel becomes constricted by what is put in it except the vessel of knowledge, for verily it becomes wider.
143. Knowledge is sufficient as loftiness.
144. Every time the knowledge of a person increases, his concern for his soul increases, and he exerts his efforts in training and reforming it.
145. Just as knowledge guides a person and saves him, similarly, ignorance misguides him and destroys him.
146. The acquisition of knowledge is indifference towards worldly pleasures.
147. The perfection of knowledge is forbearance, and the perfection of forbearance is increased tolerance and suppression [of anger].
148. The perfection of knowledge is action.
149. For the seeker of knowledge, there is honour in this world and success in the Hereafter.
150. Knowledge will never bear fruit until it is accompanied by forbearance.
151. None will attain knowledge except the one who lengthens his [period of] study.
152. The language of knowledge is truthfulness.
153. The conception of knowledge is imagination and understanding.
154. One who seeks right guidance from knowledge, it guides him.
155. One who is alone with knowledge does not feel frightened by [his] loneliness.
156. One who is not guided by knowledge is misguided by ignorance.
157. One who acts with knowledge attains his goal and desire from the Hereafter.
158. One who is fond of knowledge has [actually] done good to his soul.
159. Whoever hides [his] knowledge, it is as if he is an ignorant person.
160. One who acts against his knowledge, his crime and sin become grave.
161. One whose knowledge exceeds his intellect, it becomes a burden for him.
162. One who learns (or lacks) the depth of knowledge proceeds (or is repelled) from the ways of wisdom.
163. One who quenches his thirst from the drinking-fountain of knowledge, covers himself with the gown of forbearance.
164. One who increases his study of knowledge [and discussion about what he has learnt] does not forget what he knows and benefits from it that which he does not know.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

165. One who increases his reflection about what he has learnt safeguards his knowledge and understands that which he would not have [otherwise] understood.
166. One who does not acquire wealth through knowledge, acquires grace by it.
167. Whoever does not act upon his knowledge, it becomes a proof against him and a curse.
168. From the perfection of knowledge is acting upon what it dictates.
169. From the most honourable of knowledge is self-adornment with forbearance.
170. He who enlivens knowledge does not die.
171. Nothing increases knowledge like acting upon it.
172. Knowledge does not benefit the one who does not understand [it] and forbearance is not useful for the one who does not show clemency.
173. The basis of knowledge is its dissemination.
174. The basis of knowledge is acting upon it.
175. Coming together to study knowledge is the delight of the scholars.
176. Gatherings of knowledge are a bounty.
177. The adornments of a man are his knowledge and his forbearance.
178. How good a companion of forbearance knowledge is!
179. How good a companion of faith knowledge is!
180. How good a guide of faith knowledge is!
181. Do not make enmity with that which you are ignorant of, for indeed most of knowledge is in that which you don't know.
182. There is no provision like knowledge.
183. There is no honour like knowledge.
184. There is no nightly conversation partner like knowledge.
185. There is no treasure more worthwhile than knowledge.
186. There is no distinction more honourable than knowledge.
187. There is no guide more successful than knowledge.
188. Knowledge is not acquired except from its masters.
189. Knowledge does not benefit without [divinely granted] success.
190. Knowledge is not attained with physical comfort.
191. Knowledge is not purified without piety.
192. Nobody obtains knowledge except the one who lengthens his study.
193. One who has no insight, has no knowledge.
194. Nobody disparages knowledge and its possessors except the foolish, ignorant one.
195. A little knowledge removes a lot of ignorance.
196. People attain superiority through knowledge and intellect, not by wealth and lineage.
197. Knowledge needs action.
198. Knowledge needs forbearance.
199. Knowledge needs suppression [of anger].
200. Obey knowledge and disobey ignorance, [for by doing this] you will be successful.
201. Knowledge is the most honourable guidance.

Notes

1. Meaning: take your knowledge from a pure source.
2. Or: ...and differentiates the right religion from the wrong [and corrupt] one.
3. As seen in Q35:28

434. THE SCHOLAR

1. The scholar is one whose actions attest to the veracity of his words.
2. Scholars are strangers [in their own land] because of the large numbers of ignorant people.
3. The scholar is one who is not satisfied with [his] knowledge nor does he allow himself to be satiated by it.
4. The scholar recognizes the ignorant one because he used to be ignorant [himself] before.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. The scholar who is truly a scholar, is one who does not prevent the servants from having hope in the mercy of Allah and [at the same time] does not give them false security from the scheme of Allah.
6. The scholar and the student are partners in reward; there no good in anything between this.
7. Scholars are the purest of people in character and the least rooted in [vain] desires.
8. The scholar is a living [person] among the dead.
9. Be careful not to disparage scholars, for indeed this will degrade you and make others think ill of you and expect evil from you.
10. The most learned among you are the most fearful of you.
11. The people who are most deserving of the [guidance of the] Prophets are those who have the most knowledge about what they came with.
12. The most learned person is the one who is most infatuated with knowledge.
13. The most learned of people about Allah, the Glorified, are the most fearful of Him.
14. The most learned of people about Allah, the Glorified, are the most satisfied with His decree.
15. The greatest of people in knowledge are the most intense in [their] fear of Allah, the Glorified.
16. The most learned of people about Allah are those who are most fearful of Him.
17. The most hated of servants in the sight of Allah is the haughty scholar.
18. Those with the greatest burden among the people are the scholars who exceed the limits.
19. The most regretful of all people at the time of death are the scholars who don't act on their knowledge.
20. The most learned of people is one whose doubt does not dispel his certainty.
21. The person who is most learned about Allah is he who asks from Him the most.
22. Verily the narrators of knowledge are many, but those who are careful of [acting upon] it are few.
23. Verily the people who are most deserving of the [guidance of the] Prophets - peace be upon them - are those who have the most knowledge about (or act upon) their teachings.
24. The scholar is honoured because of his knowledge, the elderly because of his age, the doer of good because of his goodness and the king because of his kingship.
25. The scholars are judges over the people.
26. The scholar is alive even when he is dead.
27. The scholar is one who knows his [own] status [and worth].
28. The scholar sees with his heart and his mind while the ignorant one sees with his eyes and his eyesight.
29. The scholar is a person who does not get weary of gaining knowledge.
30. Scholars live on as long as the day and night remains.
31. The concealer of knowledge is not certain of being correct in it.
32. Only he is a scholar whose knowledge calls him to piety and God-wariness, to abstinence from the pleasures of the transient world and to infatuation with the heavenly abode.
33. The bane of scholars is love for leadership [and authority].
34. When you see a [true] scholar, be a servant to him.
35. Congratulations to the scholar who knows and thus restrains himself [from sin], and who fears the sudden coming [of death] so he prepares himself and gets ready. If he is questioned he articulates, and if he is left he remains silent; his speech is accurate and his silence is not because of his inability to give an answer.
36. Sit in the company of scholars and you will be felicitous.
37. Sit in the company of scholars and you will increase your knowledge.
38. The beauty of a scholar is [in] his acting upon his knowledge.
39. Sit with the scholars and your knowledge will increase, your etiquette will improve and your soul will become purified.
40. Be close to the scholars and you will perceive.
41. Many a scholar is killed by his knowledge.
42. Many a person who claims to have knowledge is not a scholar.
43. Many a scholar does not benefit [from his knowledge].
44. The rank of a scholar is the highest of ranks.
45. The lapse [and misguidance] of a scholar corrupts entire worlds.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

46. The lapse of a scholar is like the breaking up of a ship, it sinks and causes others to sink along with it.
47. The lapse of a scholar is a serious offence.
48. It is upon the scholar to learn that which he does not know and to teach the people what he has learnt.
49. It is the duty of the scholar to act upon what he knows and then seek to learn that which he does not know.
50. A scholar who opposes you is better than the ignorant person who assists you.
51. Every scholar is fearful [of Allah].
52. How many a scholar is corrupt and [how many] a worshipper is ignorant, so be wary of the corrupt among the scholars and the ignorant among the worshippers.
53. It is enough of ignorance for a scholar that his actions contradict his knowledge.
54. Be either a knowledgeable speaker or a keen listener, and beware of being the third type.
54. Be knowledgeable about the truth and act upon it, [and through this] Allah, the Glorified, will save you.
55. If the people of knowledge were to carry it as it deserves to be carried, Allah and His angels would surely love them, but they bear it in order to seek worldly gain, so Allah, the Exalted, is displeased with them and they are thus abased by it.
56. One who has knowledge asks good [and pertinent] questions.
57. One who knows must act upon his knowledge.
58. One who gains knowledge (or acts [upon his knowledge]) is rightly guided.
59. One who wastes his knowledge [by not acting upon it] faces turmoil.
60. One who reveres a scholar has revered his Lord.
61. Whoever does not nurture his knowledge in solitude, it humiliates him among the people.
62. One who claims to have reached the end of knowledge has manifested the highest level of ignorance.
63. It is necessary for every scholar to secure his sides with piety and to extend his knowledge to the one who seeks it.
64. Considering your knowledge (or action) as little is from the excellence of your knowledge.
65. He who does not act upon his knowledge has not truly gained knowledge.
66. How many are those who gain knowledge but do not follow it!
67. Allah, the Glorified, did not make it incumbent upon the ignorant one to learn until He had made it incumbent upon the learned to teach.
68. Only two [types of] people have broken my back: the impudent scholar and the ignorant worshipper. One drives people away from the truth by his immorality and the other invites people to falsehood with his devotion.
69. The competition (or argumentation) of the scholars results in their gaining benefit and their earning merits.
70. The keepers of material treasures are annihilated while they are [still] alive while the scholars remain as long as the nights and days remain. Their bodies are lost but their examples [and teachings continue to] remain in the hearts.
71. Never disrespect a scholar, even if he is lowly.
72. There is no lapse more serious than the lapse of a scholar.
73. A scholar is not a true scholar until he stops being jealous of one who is above him, does not demean one who is below him and does not take in return for his knowledge anything of the vanities of this world.
74. The knowledge of a man should surpass his speech and his intelligence should prevail over his tongue.
75. The bane of the masses is a corrupt scholar.

Notes

1. Meaning there is no good in anyone other than the scholar and the student.

435. EDUCATION AND LEARNING

1. The most helpful thing in purifying the intellect is education.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Learn and you will become knowledgeable, honour and you will be honoured.
3. Be humble in front of the one from whom you gain knowledge and the one whom you teach; and do not be from among the haughty scholars, lest your ignorance rises alongside you knowledge.
4. Acquire knowledge, for indeed if you are wealthy it will adorn you and if you are poor it will provide for you (or guard you).
5. Learn the knowledge of the one who knows, and teach your knowledge to the one who is ignorant, for if you do this, he will be teach you that which you are ignorant of and you will benefit [others] with what you have learnt.
6. He who places knowledge with one who is unworthy of it has wronged it [or him].
7. Through education, knowledge is gained.
8. Gain knowledge and you will be known by it, act upon it and you will be one of its worthy possessors.

436. THE STUDENT

1. If you are not an articulating scholar then be an attentive listener.
2. The student must discipline himself in his quest for knowledge and must neither become bored of his studies nor overestimate what he already knows.
3. One who learns becomes knowledgeable.
4. One who does not learn does not become knowledgeable.
5. One who gains knowledge so that he can act upon it is not distressed by its dullness.
6. One who does not learn in his young age, does not progress in his old age.
7. One who does not bear the hardships of gaining knowledge (or education) remains in the abject ignorance?
8. One who does not discipline himself (or spend his life) in acquiring knowledge cannot gain great successes.
9. The one who does not know must never be too proud to learn.
10. Do not speak to the ignorant ones about that which they do not know such that they belie you, for indeed your knowledge has a right over you and its right is that you bestow it to those who are deserving of it and deny it to those who are not deserving of it.
11. One who is haughty does not learn.

437. AGE AND LIFESPAN

1. The age up to which Allah, the Glorified, accepts the excuse of human beings and warns them is sixty years.
2. The age in which a person reaches maturity is forty.
3. Be wary of wasting your lifetimes in that which will not remain for you, for that which has passed from it does not return.
4. Verily your lifetime is the dower of your prosperity if you spend it in obedience to your Lord.
5. Verily your breaths are portions of your life, so do not use them up except in the obedience that brings you closer [to Allah].
6. Verily your lifetime is the time which you find yourself in.
7. Verily your lifespan is the number of your breaths, and there is a watcher who counts them.
8. Indeed the night and day are quick in razing the lifetimes.
9. Indeed your life's past is that which has come to pass and its future is hope, and the present is [time for] action.
10. Verily the life that is being shortened every moment and being dismantled every hour must be regarded as very short.
11. Indeed deceived is the one who is deluded with regards to his life and enviable is one who spends his life in the obedience of his Lord.
12. The lifespan [of a person] is [made up of] a specific number of breaths.
13. How can one be pleased with a lifetime that is diminished by [the passing of] hours?!

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

14. There is nothing more valuable than red sulphur, except that which remains from the lifetime of a believer.
15. One whose life is long, his tribulations become many.
16. One whose life is long gets afflicted by [the loss of] his dear and beloved ones.
17. One who spends his life in other than that which will save him [in the Hereafter] has missed his objective.
18. An hour of your time does not pass but that it cuts away a portion of your lifespan.
19. Do not waste your lifetime in useless pastimes, thereby leaving this world without any hope [in the Hereafter].
20. With the progression of days and nights, nothing remains of the lifetimes.
21. Nobody knows how much longer he has to live except a Prophet or a man of truth.
22. Lifetime is diminished by moments.
23. Guard your lifetime from being wasted in other than acts of worship and obedience [to Allah].

438. DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY

1. The bane of development and prosperity is the oppression of a tyrant.

439. DELVING DEEP

1. One who delves too deep [in trying to understand the essence of Allah] does not return to the truth.

440. ACTIONS AND DEEDS

1. Action without knowledge is misguidance.
2. Righteous action is the better of the two provisions.
3. Action in obedience to Allah is more beneficial, and being truthful is more beautiful and [makes one more] successful.
4. The actions of servants in this world are [brought] before their eyes in the Hereafter.
5. Honour in the sight of Allah, the Glorified, is through righteous actions, not by beautiful words.
6. Falling short in action, for the one who is certain of its reward, is foolishness.
7. Busying oneself with that which will not accompany you after death is from the greatest weakness.
8. Acting upon [one's] knowledge is from the perfection of blessings.
9. Utterances are recorded, secrets are [going to be] revealed and every soul is held hostage by what it has earned.
10. The [most] righteous companion is righteous action.
11. Act [in this world] so that you can store [provisions for the Hereafter].
12. Act upon [your] knowledge and you will attain [great] benefit.
13. Make your [righteous] action your friend your [false] aspiration your enemy.
14. Act like one who knows that Allah will surely recompense him for his evil and good deeds.
15. Strive hard in your work and do not be a storekeeper for others.
16. Act upon [your] knowledge and you will be felicitous.
17. When you know, act.
18. Perform good deeds while [you are in place where] deeds benefit, supplication is answered and repentance is raised [and accepted].
19. Eschew every action that you are in no need of and busy yourself with the affair of the Hereafter, which you must [eventually] face.
20. Work for the day for which the provisions have been stored and in which the secrets will be revealed.
21. Work while you are still alive, and while the books are [still] open, repentance is [still] accepted, the one who has strayed is [still] called [back], and the sinner is [still] given hope [of forgiveness]; before action abates, time expires, life ends and the door of repentance is closed.
22. Be wary of every action which, when its doer is asked about it, he feels ashamed and denies it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

23. Be wary of every action that is done in private and causes embarrassment in public.
24. Be wary of every action that the doer is pleased to perform himself but hates Muslims at large to perform.
25. Be wary of bad deeds, deceptive aspirations, loss of hope and the sudden coming of death.
26. You must keep away from evil action, for indeed it dishonours your reputation and increases your burden.
27. Keep away from every act that repels the freeman from you, or lowers your status, or brings harm upon you, or because of which you have to bear a burden on the Day of Judgment.
28. Is no one ready to work for his soul before the day of his misery [and adversity]?!
29. Act now, while the tongues are free, the bodies are healthy, the limbs can be flexed, there is room for change and the area of movement is vast; before all this is lost and death comes - so be certain about its coming and do not wait for it to overtake you.
30. Act now, O servants of Allah, while the neck is free [from the noose] and the spirit is unfettered in the period of guidance, while the bodies are at ease and the rest of your life lies ahead, while you have the free will to act, the opportunity to seek repentance and chance to rectifying your misdeeds. [So act] before you are overtaken by straitened circumstances and distress, fear and weakness, and before the approach of the anticipated hidden one (i.e. the Angel of Death) and the seizing of the Almighty, the Omnipotent.
31. Indeed you are in the days of hope after which is death; so whoever acts in the days of his hope before the coming of his death, his action benefits him and his death does him no harm.
32. Where are those who make their actions sincere for Allah and purify their hearts by the remembrance of Allah?!
33. The most honourable action is obedience [to Allah].
34. The best action is that which is done with sincerity.
35. The best action is that by which the pleasure of Allah is sought.
36. The most beneficial provision [for the hereafter] is good deeds.
37. The closest people to the Prophets are those who act upon their commandments [and teachings] the most.
38. The best of actions is restraining oneself from evil.
39. The most truthful of utterances is that which is spoken with the tongue of action.
40. The best of speech is that which is affirmed by good actions.
41. The best of actions is espousing the truth.
42. The best of actions is that which corresponds to the truth, and the best speech is that which matches with the facts.
43. Action is the symbol [and an indication] of one's interior.
44. Good action is the mark [and distinguishing quality] of the believer.
45. Good action is the most perfect legacy.
46. Good action is the superior [form of] piety (or piety is the most preferred action).
47. Good action is the [close] companion of the believer.
48. Nothing accompanies a person [to his grave] except [his] deeds.
49. Actions in this world are the wares for trade in the Hereafter.
50. The action done in obedience to Allah is more profitable.
51. Beautiful action indicates strong determination [and earnest effort].
52. All action is [as worthless] as scattered dust except that which is done with sincerity.
53. If you wish to work, then work for that which will save you on the Day of Presentation [of deeds].
54. Verily none of your actions will be accepted except that which you did with sincerity and without vain desire or worldly motives.
55. Verily nothing but the good deeds that you sent forward will be of any benefit to you after your death, so gather the provision of good deeds.
56. Indeed you will never carry any action to the Hereafter more beneficial than patience, satisfaction, fear and hope.
57. Verily you are recompensed for your deeds and held hostage by them.
58. Verily you are judged by what you send forth and held hostage by what you leave behind.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

59. Verily you are in greater need of acting upon what you know than of learning what you don't know.
60. Surely you are in greater need of performing your actions than you are of articulating your words.
61. You are surely in greater need of earning good deeds than you are of earning wealth.
62. Verily you are in greater need of being concerned about that which will accompany you to the Hereafter than of all that accompanies you in this world.
63. Verily you are requited for your actions, so do not do anything except good.
64. Verily if you seize the opportunity to perform righteous deeds [in this world], you will attain your greatest aspirations in the Hereafter.
65. Verily a person is only rewarded for what he has sent in advance and meets [only] that which he sent ahead.
66. The bane of action is abandoning sincerity.
67. The bane of works is the inability of the workers.
68. The bane of action is idleness.
69. When you have considered [the consequences of an action], then do
70. Through virtuous deeds, praise becomes worthy.
71. Through righteous deeds, the strength of a believer's faith is deduced.
72. It is by action, not laziness, that reward is gained.
73. It is by good action that the fruit of knowledge is reaped, not by good speech.
74. It is through action that Paradise is achieved, not through hope.
75. By righteous deeds, ranks are raised.
76. Delay in action is a symbol of laziness.
77. Keeping an action sincere is harder than performing the action itself.
78. Hasten towards praiseworthy actions and virtuous traits, and vie for truthful speech and generous giving.
79. The fruit of [good] action is the [divine] reward given for it.
80. The fruit of righteous action is [righteous] like its root.
81. The fruit of evil action is [evil] like its root.
82. The reward of your action is greater than your action.
83. The reward for an action is to the extent of the difficulty [endured] in
84. The garment of action (or knowledge) immortalizes you and does not get worn out; it preserves you and does not perish.
85. Persist in seizing the opportunity of performing the action whose reward does not perish.
86. Persist in those actions that cause you to become free from hellfire and attain Paradise.
87. The reward for an action is the fruit of the action.
88. Beautiful action declares the goodness of the source.
89. Allah has kept for every [good] deed a reward, for everything a reckoning and for every term a written appointment.
90. Virtuous action is the best provision and the greatest asset.
91. Good action is the substantiation of good words.
92. The best of your deeds are those that fulfil your duty.
93. The best of actions is that which earns gratitude.
94. The best of actions is that which rectifies the faith.
95. The best deed is that which is accompanied by sincerity.
96. The best of deeds is that which is adorned by kindness.
97. The best of actions is that which fulfils the requirements.
98. Your best action is that by which you improve your day [of reckoning] and the worst [of your actions] is that by which you corrupt your community.
99. The best action is maintaining a balance between hope and fear.
100. May Allah have mercy upon the person who anticipates death and performs good deeds for the abode of his [permanent] residence and the place of his dignity.
101. Many a small action [that you do] is considered by you as being great.
102. Supplementing words with action is the best virtue and the abstraction of action from words is the ugliest vice.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

103. Evil action is evidence of a vile origin.
104. The worst action is that which results in sins.
105. The worst action is that which destroys the good turn [that is done to others].
106. There is a great difference between the action whose pleasure wanes but its [ill] effects remain and the action whose hardship disappears but its reward remains.
107. The goodness of an action is [gauged] by the righteousness of [its] intention.
108. The correctness of action [and behaviour] beautifies a person.
109. The two qualities without which Allah, the Glorified, does not accept any deeds are: piety and sincerity.
110. Seeking lofty stations and ranks without any action is folly.
111. You must undertake righteous actions for indeed it is the provision that leads to Paradise.
112. You must persevere in your actions in times of activeness and laziness.
113. You must perform virtuous actions and hasten towards them, and let not others become more worthy of them than you.
114. I am amazed at the one who knows that there is reward for [good] deeds, how can he not make his actions righteous?!
115. The action of an ignorant person is a curse and his knowledge is misguidance.
116. In working for the permanent abode there is attainment of prosperity.
117. The merit of an action is the sincerity in it.
118. Everyone reaps what he sows and is rewarded for what he does.
119. Every person will face that which he did and is rewarded for that which he performs.
120. It is enough of a righteous act to have a good habit.
121. Whenever you perform an action with sincerity, you attain something you hope for in the Hereafter.
122. As you deal with others, so too will you be dealt with.
123. For every action there is a reward, so let your actions be for that which remains and leave aside that which perishes.
124. Let your most reliable provisions be [your] righteous actions.
125. Action will never become pure until knowledge becomes sound.
126. Action will never be pure unless it is accompanied by knowledge.
127. One who works [for the Hereafter] yearns [for it].
128. One who works increases in strength.
129. One who falls short in his action increases his lassitude.
130. One who works for the Hereafter attains success through the right [course].
131. One who does as he wishes meets that which displeases him.
132. One who is slowed down by his action cannot be quickened by his lineage.
133. One whose action is sincere will not be deprived of what he hopes for.
134. One who acts in obedience to Allah, he is well pleased with [by Allah].
135. Whoever makes his actions good, attains his hopes.
136. One who is sincere in his action his reward will be pure.
137. One whose action is action, his requital will be good.
138. Whoever acts upon the commandments of Allah, obtains reward.
139. One who acts in obedience to Allah gains [prosperity].
140. One who makes his actions good demonstrates the abundance of his intellect.
141. One who is heedless of acting in obedience to Allah has wronged himself.
142. One who is not pleased with his action, is forced to perform even better.
143. One whose action is good attains from Allah what he hopes for.
144. One whose action is free from sin attains his hope from the Hereafter.
145. One who is incapable of performing his actions falls behind in his circumstances [and does not make progress].
146. Whoever falls short in [his] action, Allah, the Glorified, afflicts him with distress; and Allah has no need for one who spares nothing of himself or his wealth [for attaining His pleasure].
147. From the perfection of [an] action is the sincerity in it.
148. From the best actions is that which leads to Paradise and saves from hellfire.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

149. He who makes his actions evil has not done well.
150. How truthful the human being is with his [own] soul and what better evidence [is there] of his nature is than his [own] action.
151. That which you beget is for the dust, that which you build is for destruction, that which you amass is to perish, that which you do is recorded in a book [of deeds] and stored for the Day of Accounting.
152. The basis of an action [and its acceptance] is the sincerity in it.
153. What a good provision [for the Hereafter] good action is!
154. How good a preparation working for the Hereafter is!
155. He who works for the Eternal Abode attains his aspiration.
156. Never do that which would tarnish you with disgrace.
157. Do not do that which will lower your dignity and your reputation.
158. Do not shoot an arrow that you are unable to turn back.
159. Never undo a knot that you are unable to firmly retie.
160. There is no trade like good deeds.
161. There is no provision more beneficial than righteous deeds.
162. There is no good in action without knowledge.
163. There is no good in action except with knowledge.
164. There is no reward for one who has no [good] deeds.
165. Righteous action is not complete except with righteous intention.
166. Action with God-wariness is never little, and how can something that is accepted [by Allah] be [considered] little!
167. A person cannot dispense with his need for righteous deeds until the time when his soul leaves his body.
168. Nobody abandons acting upon [his] knowledge except the one who is doubtful of its reward.
169. Nobody acts upon [his] knowledge except the one who is certain about the greatness of its reward.
170. Nobody can ever dispense with his need for increasing his good deeds.
171. There is no good in an act except with certitude and piety.
172. The deeds of a person ought to be better than his words and his words should not be better than his actions.
173. A person is tested by his actions, not by his words.
174. It is shameful for a person's deeds to fall short of his knowledge and for his actions to be incapable of matching his words.
175. The one who abandons [a good] action has no certainty about its reward.
176. One who sows something, reaps it.
177. The tongue of action is truer than the tongue of speech.
178. The one who acts with ignorance is like one who is travelling on the wrong path, so his effort in moving forward adds nothing for him but distance from his goal.
179. The person who gains the most felicity from [that which is] good is the one who acts upon it.
180. The one who acts with knowledge is like one who travels on the clear path.
181. One who acts upon religion for worldly gain, his recompense from Allah is [nothing but] hellfire.
182. Verily you are more in need of honourable deeds than you are of eloquent words.
183. Make your weighing scales heavy with righteous acts.
184. The best of deeds is that which people compel themselves to do.
185. The worst act is that by which you spoil your Hereafter.
186. The loftiest of actions is making [your] faith sincere and [having] true piety and certitude.
187. Verily the certitude of a believer is seen in his action, and the doubt of a hypocrite is seen in his action.
188. Working for the Hereafter with desire for this world has no benefit.
189. Actions are [carried out] through know-how.
190. Deeds are the fruits of intentions.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

441. DEALINGS

1. Do not make any dealings with one from whom you have no power to demand justice.

442. BLINDNESS AND THE BLIND

1. The blindest of people is one who is blind to our love and our excellence, and one who has hatred for us without any wrongdoing on our part towards him, except that we invited him to the truth while others invited him to temptation and [the pleasures of] this world, so they preferred it and displayed hatred towards us.
2. Sometimes the blind one arrives at his goal.
3. One who is blind to that which is in front of him instils doubt within himself.

443. THE OBSTINATE

1. Pleasing the obstinate one is a goal that cannot be attained.

444. DESCENT AND LINEAGE

1. One whose lineage is wicked, his presence [in any gathering] is bad.
2. One whose lineage is honourable, his presence is good.
3. Good manners are from the [signs of] honourable descent.

445. VIOLENCE

1. The height of folly is violence.
2. Whoever acts violently, his goal becomes difficult [to achieve].
3. One who acts violently, regrets.
4. One who perpetrates violence, regrets.

446. THAT WHICH IS OF NO CONCERN

1. Your getting involved in that which is of no concern to you is misguided ignorance.
2. Do not busy yourself with that which is of no concern to you, and do not take upon yourself more than what is enough for you, and exert all your efforts for that which will save you.
3. Leave aside that which does not concern you and busy yourself with the important work that will save you [in the Hereafter].
4. Blessed is the one who reduces his effort in that which does not concern him and exerts all his efforts for that which will save him.
5. One who discards that which is of concern to him falls into that which does not concern him.
6. One who prolongs his talk about that which he ought not to [speak of] has indeed made himself liable to dispraise.
7. The greatest inconvenience is troubling yourself with that which does not concern you.
8. One who occupies himself with that which does not concern him loses that which is important to him.
9. Whoever occupies himself with that which is unnecessary, it causes him to lose [what is more to] his benefit.

447. THE CROOKED

1. At times the crooked may become straight.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

448. HABIT

1. The best worship is overcoming [a bad] habit.
2. Habit is second nature.
3. Habit is an enslaving enemy.
4. The bane of training [of the self] is the overpowering habit.
5. Through overpowering [evil] habits, there is attainment of lofty stations.
6. Superfluity [in speech] is one of the worst habits.
7. Change your habits and acts of worship will become easier for you [to perform].
8. One who submits to his [evil] habits does not attain lofty stations.
9. Habit has authority over every human being.
10. Whoever makes jesting his habit, his seriousness is not known.

Notes

1. Or: Nosiness [and inquisitiveness about that which does not concern you] is one of the worst habits.

449. RESURRECTION AND THE HOUR

1. Blessed is the one who remembers the [Day of] Resurrection and thus increases his provisions.
2. Blessed is the one who remembers the Resurrection and thus does good [deeds].
3. You must work hard and struggle to improve your Hereafter.
4. The Hour [of reckoning] has shown its face and the sign [of its coming] is evident for the one who recognizes it.
5. The Hour has drawn near with its quakes and it has settled down with its chest on the ground.
6. They have risen from the resting place in their graves and gone towards the site of reckoning, and evidence has been brought against them.
7. One who improves his Hereafter attains success through the right [course].
8. One who is certain about the Hereafter increases his provisions [for it].
9. The goodness of the Hereafter is [attained] through good deeds.
10. When the horrors of the Day of Reckoning will be witnessed, there will be many who will show extreme regret.
11. Being occupied with improving your Hereafter will save you from the chastisement of hellfire.

450. THE MASSES

1. Separating yourself from the masses is from the best magnanimity.

451. ASSISTANCE

1. Assist and you will be assisted.
2. Assist your bother in gaining his guidance.
3. Just as you assist [others], you are assisted.
4. Do not assist a strong person over a weak one.
5. One who assists [a disbeliever] against a Muslim has indeed exited from the fold of Islam.

452. SEEKING ASSISTANCE

1. One who seeks assistance from the weak demonstrates his [own] weakness.
2. Whoever seeks assistance from one who is not independent has wasted his affair.
3. Whoever seeks the assistance of his enemy in order to fulfil his need, increases his distance from it [instead of getting it].
4. One who seeks assistance from Allah is assisted by Him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. Seek assistance from your Lord, and ask Him to grant you success and the abandonment of every shortcoming (or disgraceful act) that drives you into doubt or surrenders you to misguidance.
6. One who seeks assistance from the people of intellect traverses the path of right guidance.

453. SUCCOR

1. Succour descends from Allah to the extent of one's requirement.
2. To the extent of the need, there is succour from Allah.
3. Whoever turns his request to you [and seeks his need from you], assisting him becomes incumbent upon you.

454. KEEPING PROMISES AND FULFILLING PLEDGES

1. Being loyal to the treacherous is treachery in the sight of Allah, the Glorified.
2. Loyalty is the twin of trustworthiness and the adornment of brotherhood.
3. Loyalty means preserving the rights [of others] and magnanimity means caring for one's close relatives.
4. Verily loyalty is the twin of truthfulness and I do not know of a shield that is more protective than it.
5. Loyalty is nobility.
6. Loyalty is the twin of truthfulness.
7. Loyalty is the trait of the honourable.
8. Loyalty is the symbol of abundant religiosity and strong trustworthiness.
9. If something happens between you and your enemy, which leads you to a truce and the enacting of a peace treaty, then preserve your pact with loyalty and guard your pledge with trust, and make your soul a shield between you and that which you have pledged.
10. The bane of covenants is lack of care [in fulfilling them].
11. The bane of loyalty is treachery.
12. When you make a promise, keep it.
13. When you make an agreement, fulfil it.
14. By their faithful loyalty, the virtuous ones are known.
15. The distinction of creatures is [by their] loyalty.
16. Guard your promise with loyalty and your reward will be good.
17. The abode of loyalty is never without the [presence of the] honourable, and is never occupied by the wicked.
18. The cause of intimacy is loyalty.
19. Keeping promises is the practice of the honourable ones.
20. You must espouse loyalty, for it is the most protective shield.
21. Loyalty is the ornament of the intellect and the symbol of nobility.
22. The most honourable characteristic is loyalty.
23. Loyalty is honour, friendship is compassion.
24. Loyalty is a symbol of purity.
25. Loyalty is the fortress of eminence.
26. A promise is an ailment and its cure is its fulfilment.
27. I have never slept with a promise I made to someone that had remained unfulfilled, thereby causing him to toss and turn restlessly in his bed so that he could successfully get what he needs [from me in the morning] but that my restlessness on my bed was much greater as a result of my desperation to meet him and fulfil the debt of his promise and out of fear of a hindrance that could cause its reneging, for indeed reneging on a promise is not from the characteristics of the honourable.
28. The basis of a promise is its fulfilment.
29. How good a characteristic loyalty is!
30. How good a companion of truthfulness loyalty is, and how good an associate of God-wariness piety is!
31. How good a companion of trustworthiness loyalty is!
32. The promise of an honourable person is immediate and swift.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

33. The promise of a wicked person is delayed and full of excuses.
34. Do not promise that which you are incapable of fulfilling.
35. Do not guarantee that which you are incapable of fulfilling.
36. Never make a promise that you are not confident you will be able to keep.
37. He who breaks his promises is not loyal in his covenants.
38. Be a keeper of promises and a fulfiller of vows.
39. One who fulfils his promise demonstrates his nobility.
40. One who safeguards his covenant is considered loyal.
41. One who is unwaveringly loyal deserves to be chosen [as a friend].
42. The promise [that is made] is one of the two bondages.
43. Fulfilling the promise [one makes] is one of the two emancipations.
44. A polite refusal is better than a protracted promise.
45. Fulfilling promises is from the signs of distinction.
46. Sincere friendship and fulfilling promises are from loyalty to [one's] pledge.
47. Be steadfast [and loyal] in fulfilling your pledges.
48. Never trust the promise of the one who has no religion.
49. One who has no loyalty cannot keep a promise.
50. The promise of one who has no intellect is not relied upon.
51. You will never abide by the covenant of the book until you know the one who has cast it away.
52. Never let the hardship that you undergo in [fulfilling] the covenant of Allah lead you to break it, for indeed your patience during the hardship from which you seek relief and a favourable outcome are better for you than the excuse [and betrayal] whose evil consequences you fear and because of which you are encompassed by chastisement from Allah.
53. The most honourable of endeavours is being careful of [fulfilling] one's pledges (and the best trait is keeping ties with near relatives).
54. Indeed promises are [like] metal collars around the necks [of people] until the Day of Resurrection, so whoever fulfils them is delivered by Allah, and whoever breaks them is forsaken by Allah, and whoever takes them lightly, they will take their plea to the One who has enjoined them and has ordered His creation to fulfil them.
55. Do not renege on your covenant and do not break your pledge; and do not double-cross your enemy, for Allah has made his covenant and his pact a safety for him.
56. One of the most honourable of traits is safeguarding [and fulfilling] your pledges.
57. One of the most honourable of traits is being faithful to your pledges.
58. He who does not observe his promises and agreements has no conviction in Allah.
59. One who enters upon the springs of loyalty is quenched by the drink of purity.
60. People are safe from the betrayal of one in whose heart resides loyalty.
61. One of the signs of faith is fulfilling promises.
62. Keeping promises is from the perfection of [one's] magnanimity.
63. From the best [teachings] of Islam is the fulfilling of pledges.
64. How good is loyalty and how evil is treachery!
65. He who delays in fulfilling a promise has not kept it.
66. Fulfilling [one's] pledges is the adornment of honour.
67. One who breaks his pledge earns dispraise.
68. For every pledge that is broken there is uncertainty.

455. FLAWS AND FAULTS

1. The greatest flaw is that you fault others for what is [also] in you.
2. The most incompetent of all people is one who is able to remove a flaw in himself but does not do so.
3. Verily everyone has faults, so do not expose that which is hidden from you, for indeed Allah, the Glorified, has hidden them out of clemency; and hide the faults [of others] as much as possible, [and in return] Allah, the Glorified, will hide that which you would like to remain hidden.
4. The inner hearts will soon become aware of the secret faults.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. Scrutinizing the faults of others is a fault [in itself].
6. I am surprised at the one about whom it is said: 'Indeed in him there is evil,' and he knows it is in him, how can he be annoyed?
7. I am amazed at the one who is described with a good trait that he knows is not in him, how can he be pleased?
8. Those with faults love to spread the faults of people so that they get a greater excuse for their own faults.
9. I am amazed at one who disapproves of the faults of people while he has more faults himself and does not see them.
10. The eyes of the lover are blind to the faults of his beloved, and his ears are deaf to the ugliness of his evils.
11. Covering up the faults [of others] is generosity and virtue.
12. A person's own faults are enough to keep him occupied from the faults of other people.
13. Let what one knows of his own faults hold him back from [disclosing] what he knows of the faults of others.
14. Let that which you know of your own faults prevent you from mentioning the faults of others.
15. Let the most preferred people in your eyes be the ones who guide you to your faults and help you to reform yourself.
16. Let the most beloved of all people to you be one who guides you to the right and discloses your faults to you.
17. Not every fault is manifested.
18. If the deficient person came to know of his own deficiency, he would be greatly disturbed by what he learnt of his faults.
19. One who seeks a fault [in others] will find it.
20. One who shows you your fault has indeed counselled you.
21. One who knows what [flaw] is in himself hides the faults of his brother.
22. One who informs you of your faults is indeed your friend.
23. One who hides your faults [from you] is indeed your enemy.
24. One who discloses your faults to you guards you in your absence.
25. One who flatters you for your fault, criticizes you in your absence.
26. One who sees his own faults does not fault anyone.
27. One who is looking for the faults of people should start with himself.
28. Whoever disapproves of the faults of people but accepts them in himself, then that is a fool.
29. One who belittles others for that which he himself does, then that is an imbecile.
30. One of the greatest faults of a person is for his flaws to be hidden to him.
31. Nothing prevents any of you from meeting his brother who has a fault which he hates [and advising him to reform] except the fear that he too may meet you with a similar fault; indeed you have joined together in the love of this transitory [life] and have rejected the Hereafter.
32. He who mentions your faults has not guarded you in your absence.
33. He who points you to your faults and guards [your honour in] your absence has spared no efforts in advising you.
34. A person's cognizance of his own faults is the most beneficial knowledge.
35. Never pursue the faults of people, for indeed if you think about it, you have of your own faults that which will keep you occupied from finding faults in others.
36. Do not fault others for that which you do yourself, and do not punish (or rebuke) others for the sin that you permit yourself [to indulge in].
37. Pursuing the faults [of others] is from the gravest evils.
38. Pursuing the faults [of others] is from the most detestable of faults and worst evils.
39. Whoever exposes his brother's veil [and reveals his flaws], the faults of his own household (or family) get exposed.
40. One who pursues the faults of people, Allah exposes his own faults.
41. One who seeks to learn about the secrets of his neighbour, his [own] curtains [of secrets] are torn apart.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

42. Whoever searches for the secrets of others, Allah uncovers his own secrets.
43. Whoever pursues the hidden flaws [of others], Allah makes the affection of the hearts forbidden to him.
44. Hide the flaw of your brother because of what you know is in yourself.
45. Hide the flaws [of others] as much as you can and Allah, the Glorified, will hide for you that which you would like to remain hidden.
46. The most hated of all people is the fault-finder.

456. TAUNTING

1. Whoever taunts others for something is himself affected by it.

457. LIFESTYLE

1. The most pleasant life is [a life of] contentment.
2. The person with the worst lifestyle of all people is the jealous one.
3. The most felicitous lifestyle is achieved by abandoning unnecessary constraints [and formalities].
4. Of all the people, the person who has the best lifestyle is one in whose grace other people live.
5. The person with the most blessed lifestyle is one who has been granted contentment by Allah, the Glorified, and who has been given a good wife.
6. Verily the person who has the happiest life of all people is one who is satisfied with what Allah has apportioned for him.
7. Verily the person with the best lifestyle is one through whose life the lives of others are improved.
8. Death is preferable to abasement.
9. Death is preferable to succumbing to disgrace (or giving up freedom).
10. Having less is preferable to humiliation.
11. Management [and planning] makes life good.
12. The mainstay of life is good estimation and its basis is good management.
13. One who lives, dies.
14. One who lives [a long life], loses his loved ones.
15. Early death is better than a wretched life.
16. Life has sweetness and bitterness.
17. The bane of livelihood is mismanagement.
18. Three things don't let their possessor enjoy a happy life: malice, jealousy and bad character.
19. The beauty of life is [in] contentment.
20. One who stays in the company of his enemy does not enjoy a happy life.
21. Good estimation with sufficiency is better than striving in extravagance.
22. Preferring comfort [over hard work] cuts off the means of profit [and benefit].

458. LOWERING THE GAZE

1. Lowering the gaze is a sign of magnanimity.
2. Lowering the gaze is better than staring.
3. Lowering the gaze is one of the best [acts of] piety.
4. Lowering the gaze is from perfect gracefulness.
5. One who lowers his gaze relieves his heart.
6. One who lowers his gaze, his regret reduces and he is saved from harm.
7. How good an act of piety lowering the gaze is!
8. How good a curtailer of lustful desires lowering the gaze is!
9. There is no magnanimity like lowering the gaze.
10. One who does not feign negligence and lower his gaze in many situations, his life becomes bitter.
11. One who frees his gaze occasions (or brings about) his [own] destruction.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

12. The eye is the scout of the heart (or of temptations).
13. The eye is the emissary of the heart.
14. Eyes are the informers of the heart.
15. Eyes are the hunting traps of Satan.
16. When the eye sees what is [lustfully] desired, the heart becomes blind to the consequence.
17. Blessed is the eye that forsakes its sleep in obedience [and worship] to Allah.
18. The day has dawned for those with two eyes.
19. Bear annoyances patiently [in life] otherwise you will never be pleased.
20. The glance is the scout of temptations.
21. There is no part of the body that is less thankful than the eye, so do not give it what it seeks thereby letting it occupy you from the remembrance of Allah.

Notes

1. This could mean: The matter is clear for those whose eyes are open to see.

459. SEEING

1. Seeing something [yourself] is not the same as being informed about

460. HELPER

1. There is no good in a helper who humiliates.

461. INARTICULATENESS

1. The worst inarticulateness is [that which is caused by] irritation.
2. Muteness is better than inarticulateness (or error).
3. The sign of inarticulateness is repeating oneself during a debate and increased excitement during conversation.
4. No declaration can be made with inarticulateness.
5. Inarticulateness is beleaguering.

462. OUTCOME

1. Little with a praised outcome is better than plenty with a harmful consequence.

463. THE ENVIABLE

1. Envable is the one whose certitude is strong.
2. Many a person is envied [by others] for something which is [actually] his affliction.
3. How many a person is envied for the blessing he has been given [in this world] while he is among those who will be destroyed in the Hereafter.

464. THE DECEIVED

1. Deceived is the one who is occupied with the world and loses his share of the Hereafter.
2. Deceived is the one whose faith is corrupt.
3. Deceived is the one who sells a lofty Paradise for a lowly sin.
4. Who is more deceived than one who exchanges Allah, the Glorified, for other than Him?!

465. IMBECILITY

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Imbecility is misguidance.
2. Counter imbecility with astuteness.
3. It is enough of imbecility for a person to look at the faults of people when the same faults are hidden to him of himself.
4. Imbecility is from the most detestable of traits.

466. TREACHERY

1. Treachery by everyone is evil, but by those who have power and authority it is worse.
2. Treachery increases the burden [of sin] and degrades one's status.
3. Beware of treachery, for indeed it is the ugliest betrayal; and verily the treacherous one is humiliated in the sight of Allah.
4. The worst treachery is divulging the secret [that has been entrusted to you].
5. Treachery is the quality of the wicked.
6. Treachery multiplies [one's] sins.
7. Eschew treachery, for indeed it takes you away from the Qur'an.
8. The treachery of a man is a disgrace upon him.
9. Be one who acts with goodness, forbids evil and shuns the trait of treachery.
10. One who acts treacherously is sullied by his treachery.
11. He who is certain about the place of [final] return does not act treacherously.
12. How appropriate it is for the treacherous one to be dealt with disloyally.
13. There is no faith in the treacherous.
14. With treachery, the companionship of a friend does not last.
15. Treachery with the treacherous is loyalty in the sight of Allah, the Glorified.
16. Treachery is the worst of the two betrayals.
17. The person who will face the quickest retribution is the man with whom you make a contract while having the intention of being loyal to it, whereas his intention is to betray you.

467. DELUSION

1. Be cautious of being deceived by the delusion of a small hindrance or being made to stumble by the joy of an insignificant transitory pleasure [of this world].
2. The consolidation of delusion is in sleeping with ease in the presence of the enemy.
3. Blessed be the one who has not been killed by the lethal poisons of deception.
4. It is enough of a delusion for a person to trust all that his soul lures him towards.
5. He ('a) said about the one whom he praised: He has not been killed by the lethal poisons of delusion and has not been covered (or overcome) by the uncertainties of matters.
6. He who trusts in the falsehood of delusions and yearns for the false [and short-lived] joys has not thought about the consequences of matters.
7. One who is deluded by respite, is tormented by death.
8. Delusion suffices as ignorance.
9. One who is deluded by his condition, reduces his efforts.
10. One who is deluded by the peacefulness of the time gets distressed by the impact of calamities.
11. When a person persists in sinning and [still] expects to be forgiven, then he is under a delusion about Allah, the Glorified.
12. There is no judiciousness with heedlessness.
13. There is no heedlessness [and delusion] like reliance on the times.
14. A deluded person may [sometimes] remain unharmed.
15. How many a person is deluded by the good that is spoken about him.
16. How many a person has been deluded by what is concealed from him.
17. Neither is every deluded person saved, nor is every seeker needy.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

468. USURPATION

1. One usurped stone in a house is the guaranty of its ruin.

469. ANGER

1. Anger strikes down its possessor and exposes his faults.
2. Anger is a kindled fire, one who suppresses it extinguishes the fire and one who lets it burn freely is the first person who will be burnt by it.
3. Anger arouses hidden feelings of malice.
4. Keep away from anger, for its beginning is madness and its end is regret.
5. The person who is most capable of being on the right is one who does not get angry.
6. The best control is control over anger.
7. Leave some room from your anger for your satisfaction, and when you fly off [in a rage] then calm back down.
8. Guard yourselves from the vehemence of anger, and prepare for it the restraint and forbearance that will help you fight against it.
9. Beware of anger, for it is indeed a burning fire.
10. The best of people is one who swallows his anger and displays forbearance despite having power [to take revenge].
11. A person's most bitter enemies are his anger and his lust, so whoever controls these two, his status is elevated and he attains his goal.
12. Anger is the conveyance of impetuosity.
13. Anger evokes impetuosity.
14. Anger is the fire of the hearts.
15. Anger is an evil which will destroy [you] if you obey it.
16. Anger is an enemy, so do not let it control you.
17. Anger corrupts intellects and distances one from the right (or from reward).
18. Verily if you obey the vehemence of anger, it will lead you to the utmost destruction.
19. When anger comes over you, then overcome it with forbearance and dignity.
20. Through excessive anger, impetuosity comes about.
21. How evil an associate anger is! It exposes faults, brings evil closer and distances good.
22. Remedy your anger with silence and your lust with reason.
23. Repelling anger with forbearance is the fruit of knowledge.
24. Repel [fits of] rage with forbearance.
25. Yielding to anger is the cause of destruction.
26. Counter anger with forbearance and you will make your results praiseworthy in every matter.
27. The raging fire of anger leads to the embarking of destruction.
28. Counter anger with forbearance.
29. Yielding to anger leads to regret and disobedience.
30. One who overcomes his anger has gained victory over Satan.
31. Satan is victorious over the one who has been overcome by his anger.
32. In anger there is destruction.
33. Increased anger degrades its possessor and exposes his faults.
34. Be slow in getting angry, quick in calming down and ready to accept excuses.
35. The devil has no greater lasso [to ensnare human beings with] than anger and women.
36. One who gets angry frequently makes others weary [of him].
37. One who turns his anger loose hastens his [own] death.
38. One who is overpowered by his anger is not safe from destruction.
39. One whose anger overpowers him is susceptible to its harm.
40. One who opposes his anger has yielded to forbearance.
41. Whoever submits to his anger, his ruin is hastened.
42. One whose anger is much, his pleasure is not known.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

43. He who gets angry on the one whom he cannot harm, prolongs his sadness and torments himself.
44. Whoever is overpowered by his anger and lust, then he is in the category of beasts.
45. He who gets angry upon one whom he has no power over, dies with his rage.
46. When shall I vent my anger if I get angry, is it when I am incapable (of taking revenge) and it is said to me "it is better for you to be patient" or when I have the power to (exact revenge) and it is said to me "it is better for you to forgive"?
47. Let your anger never prevail over your forbearance.
48. Never be quick in getting angry, thereby letting it become your uncontrollable habit.
49. There is no etiquette with anger.
50. There is no relationship more vile than anger.
51. The glory of anger does not match the humility of seeking pardon.

Notes

1. Or: One who gets angry frequently becomes weary.

470. SEEKING FORGIVENESS

1. Seek forgiveness and you will be provided sustenance.
2. The best supplication (or means of coming closer to Allah) is seeking forgiveness.
3. ۞3. Seeking forgiveness wipes out [one's] sins.
4. Seeking forgiveness is the remedy of sins.
5. Seeking forgiveness has the greatest recompense and the quickest reward.
6. Sincere repentance purges one's sins.
7. If the people were to turn in repentance [to Allah] and seek forgiveness whenever they disobeyed [or sinned], they would neither be punished nor would they be destroyed.
8. One who has been granted [the opportunity to seek] repentance shall not be deprived of forgiveness.
9. One who seeks forgiveness from Allah attains absolution.
10. What a good means [of gaining the pleasure of Allah] seeking forgiveness is!
11. There is no intercessor more successful than repentance.
12. No one gains forgiveness except he who reciprocates evil with good.

471. NEGLIGENCE

1. The wakefulness of eyes is of no benefit with the negligence of hearts.
2. Negligence reaps delusion and brings one closer to destruction.
3. Be cautious of negligence, for indeed it is from the corruption of [one's sensory] perception.
4. Beware of negligence and being deluded by respite, for indeed negligence corrupts deeds, and death cut off hopes.
5. Negligence is misguidance and heedlessness is ignorance.
6. Negligence is joy.
7. Negligence is the most harmful enemy.
8. Negligence is the trait of the foolish.
9. Negligence is the opposite of judiciousness.
10. Negligence is the misguidance of souls and the symbol of misfortunes.
11. Continuous negligence blinds insight.
12. The intoxication of negligence and delusion is harder to recover from than the intoxication of wines [and alcoholic drinks].
13. Counter negligence with attentiveness.
14. I am surprised by the negligence of the intelligent ones with regards to seeking provisions and preparing for the Hereafter.
15. Taking repose in negligence is delusion.
16. Pitiable indeed is the negligent person whose entire life will be used as proof against him and whose days will lead him to wretchedness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

17. Listener, awaken from your negligence, reduce your hastiness, brace yourself, be on your guard and remember your grave, for indeed you must pass through it.
18. Negligence is enough of a misguidance.
19. It is enough of negligence for a person to waste his efforts in that which does not concern [or benefit] him.
20. It is enough of negligence for a person to squander his life in that which will not save him [in the Hereafter].
21. One who is negligent becomes ignorant.

Notes

1. This is because the negligent one is not concerned about anything that goes on around him.

472. THE NEGLIGENT

1. I am amazed at the one who is negligent, while death is swift in seeking him.
2. One whose negligence is prolonged, his destruction is hastened.
3. One whose negligence overcomes him, his heart dies.
4. One who is negligent about the events of [his] days is awakened by death.
5. Woe be to the one who is overcome by negligence so he forgets his [final] journey and does not prepare for it.
6. No deed is accepted from the negligent one.

473. THE VICTOR AND THE VANQUISHED

1. At times the [one who is] vanquished may gain victory.
2. He who tries to vanquish the one who is above him is overpowered.
3. Every victor other than Allah, is vanquished.

474. FIGHTING

1. Do not pick a fight with one whom you cannot repel.

475. ISTAKE

2. A person's mistake about (or harshness towards) the one who is friendly towards him is one of the most forbidden things for him.

476. BETRAYAL

3. The worst thing that can come upon the hearts is betrayal.

477. RANCOR AND PERFIDY

1. The tongue of a perfidious person is sweet but his heart is bitter.
2. The vilest perfidy is the perfidy of the leaders.
3. Verily the most perfidious of all people is the one who is most deceitful to himself and most disobedient to his Lord.
4. Perfidy is the trait of the recalcitrant.
5. Rancour is the seed of evil.
6. Rancour is the malady of hearts.
7. Perfidy earns vituperation.
8. Rancour nullifies good deeds.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

9. Perfidy is the worst craftiness.
10. Perfidy is from the characteristics of the wicked.
11. Deceiving a friend and being disloyal to one's pledges are from [the acts of] betrayal of one's covenant.
12. Whoever deceives the people in their faith, then he is an opponent of Allah and His Prophet.
13. When one deceives you out of his enmity [with you], then do not blame him or censure him.

478. GRIEF

1. Grief makes one dispirited and ends one's joy.
2. Sorrow destroys the body.
3. Sorrows are the ailment of the hearts.
4. Grief is the distinguishing mark of the believers.
5. Grief wears away the body.
6. Sorrow and anxiety do not bring back what has been lost.
7. To the extent of pleasure, there is distress.
8. One who bears his distress [patiently] realizes [his] opportunities.
9. Grief is one of the two senilities.
10. Cast away the sorrows that come upon you through resolute patience and virtuous certitude.
11. Grief emaciates the body.
12. Grief is an ailment of the soul.
13. To the extent of endeavours, there are anxieties.
14. How many a sorrowful person has been driven to perpetual bliss by his sorrow.
15. One whose grief increases, his sorrow becomes permanent.
16. To the extent of [one's material] acquisition, there are heartaches.
17. For every distress there is a relief.
18. One who continuously worries is overpowered by sorrow.
19. One whose grief increases, his body becomes sick.
20. One whose entire concern is for his Hereafter attains what he hopes for.

479. BEING INDEPENDENT OF OTHERS

1. Dispense with your dependency on anyone and you will be like him.
2. One who is independent from people, Allah, the Glorified, enriches him.
3. One who becomes independent becomes an honour for his people and one who is needy becomes contemptible to them.
4. That which you have no need for is better than that through which you gain independence.

480. AFFLUENCE AND THE RICH

1. A rich person is he who becomes rich through contentment.
2. A [truly] rich person is one who prefers contentment.
3. The rich person feels at home [even when he is] in a strange land.
4. The ignorance of a rich person abases him whereas the knowledge of a poor person elevates him.
5. At times a rich person may be lowlier than an ugly sheep.
6. Sometimes a rich person may be needier than a poor person.
7. Few are the rich who [financially] support and assist others.
8. How many of the rich are unneeded [because of their unwillingness to help others].
9. It is obligatory upon the rich person not to withhold his wealth from the poor.
10. Never count the one from whose wealth others don't get sustenance as a rich person.
11. There is no offence greater than the offence of the rich who deprives the needy.
12. Opulence through other than Allah is the greatest indigence and wretchedness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

13. Seek refuge with Allah from the intoxication of riches, for indeed it has an intoxication that takes long to recover from.
14. The richest of you are the most contented among you.
15. The greatest of all riches is the intellect.
16. The most honourable wealth is abandoning [false] aspirations.
17. The best of riches is that through which one's honour is secured.
18. The richest of the rich is one who is not a prisoner to greed.
19. The greatest of riches is contentment and toleration of poverty.
20. Opulence brings about transgression.
21. Riches turn one who is not a master into a master.
22. Wealth and poverty manifest the essences of men and their qualities.
23. The brother of affluence is one who covers himself with contentment.
24. Arrogance in wealth sows the seed (or warns) of abasement in poverty.
25. The bane of affluence is stinginess.
26. The best affluence is the affluence of the soul.
27. Many an opulence leads to lasting poverty.
28. The alms-tax of affluence [and comfort] is being good with neighbours and keeping ties with near relatives.
29. Two things are such that their value is recognized only by one who has lost them: wealth and power.
30. Restraining oneself from that which is in the possession of [other] people is present affluence.
31. The deception of wealth leads to insolence.
32. Loss of wealth is an advantage for the sagacious and a [cause of] regret for the foolish.
33. The whole of affluence is in contentment and satisfaction.
34. One who would like to gain affluence without possessions, prestige without authority and abundance without kinsfolk, then let him turn away from the abjectness of disobedience to Allah into the honour of His obedience, for indeed [through this] he will find all of these.
35. He who has been granted hopelessness in [obtaining] what people possess, contentment with what he is given and satisfaction with the divine decree has acquired affluence.
36. Do not be delighted by wealth and comfort, and do not be grieved by poverty and tribulation, for verily gold is tested by fire and the believer is tested by tribulation.
37. Affluence through [complete reliance on] Allah is the greatest affluence.
38. One who does not become needless of this world through Allah has no religion.
39. There is no affluence except through contentment.
40. No affluence [can be acquired] with mismanagement.

481. COMING TO THE AID OF THE AGGRIEVED

1. Through aiding the aggrieved, there is a protection for you from the chastisement of Allah.
2. From the expiations of great sins is aiding the aggrieved.
3. Coming to the aid of the aggrieved is one of the best benevolent acts.
4. Nothing brings reward like aiding the aggrieved.

482. BACKBITING

1. The one who listens to gossip is one of the two backbiters.
2. Beware of backbiting, for indeed it makes you hated by Allah and the people, and renders your rewards void.
3. The wicked of [all] people is the backbiter.
4. The most hated of creatures in the sight of Allah is the backbiter.
5. Verily the mentioning of slander is the worst falsehood.
6. Slander is the worst falsehood.
7. Backbiting is the sign of a hypocrite.
8. Backbiting is the effort of the feeble.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

9. Backbiting is the food of the dogs of hell.
10. The one who listens to gossip is just like the backbiter.
11. One who listens to gossip is one of the two backbiters.
12. One who listens to gossip is the partner of the backbiter.
13. One who is fond of backbiting about others is reviled.
14. The one who listens to gossip is like its narrator.
15. Do not accustom yourself to backbiting, for indeed being accustomed to it is a great sin.
16. Even a little slander is calumny.
17. Servant of Allah, do not make haste in [exposing] the fault of a servant, for he may have been forgiven for it, and do not count yourself safe from [your] small sins as you might be punished for them.

483. THE UNSEEN

1. In the unseen there is wonder.

484. SENSE OF HONOUR AND POSSESSIVENESS

1. Beware of being possessive in a situation where it is not required, for verily this will lead the soul that is sound to become sick and the one that is innocent [and calm] into suspicion [and uneasiness].
2. The proof of a man's sense of honour is his chastity.
3. A man's sense of honour is faith.
4. The possessiveness of a woman is transgression.
5. A man's sense of honour is to the extent of his self-respect.
6. The believer's possessiveness is for [the sake of] Allah, the Glorified.

Notes

1. In the context of being possessive of one's wife or the female members of one's family such that no other man should look at them or have any contact with them as this would hurt one's sense of honour.

485. DEVIATION FROM THE RIGHT PATH

1. The thing with the worst outcome is deviation [from the right path].
2. Deviation is insolence.
3. One who deals offensively [with others] is dealt with in the same way.
4. Woe be to the one who persists in his deviation and does not return to the right path.
5. There is no piety with deviation.

Notes

1. Because the deviant and misguided person is heedless of God and the Hereafter.

486. THE UTMOST

1. Whoever attains the utmost of what he loves, then let him expect the utmost of what he hates.

487. BEING OPTIMISTIC

1. Be optimistic and you will become successful.

488. UNREST

1. Unrest (or acquisition [of property]) is accompanied by hardship.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. In times of unrest, be like an adolescent camel that has neither udders for milking nor a back strong enough for riding.
3. One who ignites the fire of sedition will become fuel for it.
4. One of the greatest tribulations is the continuation of strife.
5. I swear by my life that in the flames of unrest [that come after me], the believer will get destroyed while the non-Muslim shall remain safe.

489. THE ONE WHO IS ENTHRALLED

1. Not everyone who is enthralled is reproached.

490. CHIVALRY

1. Chivalry is a gift that is granted and a harm that is restrained.
2. The human being has not been adorned with anything more beautiful than chivalry.
3. The order of chivalry is being tolerant of the mistakes of one's brothers and fulfilling one's obligation towards his neighbours.

491. WICKEDNESS AND IMMORALITY

1. Wickedness is a decrepit fortress, it does not prevent [any harm from reaching] its people, nor does it protect the one who seeks refuge in it.
2. Beware of immoral gatherings, for indeed they anger the Most Merciful and take you to the fire of hell.
3. Wickedness is from the traits of the disbelievers.
4. Verily the wicked comprise of all the oppressive and treacherous people.
5. The wicked is one who declares [his sins] openly.
6. There is no [sin for] backbiting for the [openly] corrupt.
7. The immoral person has no [sense of] caution.
8. The reign of the wicked is the [cause of] abasement of the virtuous.
9. Flee far away from the wicked, immoral one.
10. The cutting off ties with an immoral person is a gain.
11. There is no affluence with immorality.
12. It behoves one who knows the wicked not to act like them.
13. The one who publicizes an immoral act is like the one who has committed it.

492. OBSCENITY

1. Be careful of obscene language and lies, for indeed they degrade the speaker.
2. Using obscene language with one who is above you is destructive ignorance.
3. Using obscene language with one who is below you is abasing ignorance.
4. Using obscene language with one who is at your level is a pecking like the pecking of two cockerels, and a quarrelling like the quarrelling of two dogs, they will never separate until they are wounded or humiliated, and this is neither the act of the wise nor the practice of the intelligent; and it may be that he (your rival) shows forbearance towards you, thereby becoming greater than you and more honourable, while you remain lower than him and more contemptible.
5. One who uses obscene language is reviled.
6. One whose obscenity increases is regarded as vile.
7. An honourable person never uses obscene language, ever.
8. There is none more shameless than the one who utters obscenities.
9. Indeed obscene language and vulgarities are not from the morals of Islam.
10. One who uses obscene language cures [the envy of] his enviers [and brings them joy].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

11. The one who is forbearing does not use obscene language.
12. Two people never insult each other except that the one who is wicked of the two prevails.

493. PRIDE AND BOASTING

1. What reason has a human being to be proud when his beginning is a drop of semen and his end is a carcass; neither can he sustain himself nor can he repel his [own] death!
2. Never become proud of a state that you attained without [any] device [and hard work], and never be arrogant of a rank that you attained without merit, for indeed that which is built by circumstance is destroyed by entitlement.
3. There is no foolishness greater than arrogance.
4. Boasting ought to be about the greatest effort, keeping promises and being overly generous, not about the worn out bones [of one's ancestors] and evil traits.
5. Boastfulness stems from the smallness of [one's] status [and worth].
6. Beware of contesting with Allah, the Glorified, in His greatness, for Allah, the Most High, abases every tyrant and belittles every boaster.

494. RELIEF AND WAITING FOR RELIEF

1. The more restricting [and difficult] the hardship, the closer the relief.
2. The time when relief is closest is when the affair becomes unbearable.
3. When the openings [and ways] get blocked, the rays of relief begin to appear.
4. When the difficulties reach their peak, there is hope for relief.
5. The first act of worship is waiting for relief with patience.
6. Expecting relief is one of the two comforts.

Notes

1. 'Waiting for the relief' is also used to mean waiting for the reappearance of the Mahdi ('a) as he will bring relief and justice to the oppressed believers.

495. HAPPINESS AND JOY

1. How many a joyful [person] has been driven by his joy towards perpetual sorrow.
2. Do not be joyful about that which is coming [to you].
3. Never be joyful about the downfall of others for verily you do not know what time will do to you.
4. Do not be happy with the mistake of others, for indeed you will not always be correct.

496. FLEEING TO ALLAH

1. Flee towards Allah, the Glorified, and do not flee away from Him, for indeed He will find you and you will not escape Him.

497. OPPORTUNITY AND ITS LOSS

1. Not everything that has gone comes back.
2. One who takes advantage of [unexpected] opportunities remains safe from distress.
3. Whoever finds a place where sweet water enters and he can quench his thirst with it but does not take advantage of it, he will soon feel thirsty and seek it, but will not find it.
4. Many a lost thing is such that it cannot be regained.
5. It may be that he who strives and acts quickly is saved [and succeeds] while the slow seeker [only] hopes [to attain it in the future].
6. The return of an opportunity [that is lost] is far off and unlikely.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Seize the opportunity when it arises, for indeed you will not get it [again] after you lose it.
8. Breathe before the necks are strangled, and yield before being driven violently.
9. Take the respite of the days, protect the boundaries of Islam, and anticipate the sudden attack of death.
10. May Allah have mercy on the one who takes the benefit of respite [and opportunity], hastens towards good deeds and cowers out of fear [of Allah].
11. Opportunity is quick to pass on and slow to return.
12. The [passing of] hours diminishes lifetimes and bring [one] closer to annihilation.
13. Arrange an abode for yourself before your descent and prepare the dwelling before your arrival.
14. Make your time of comfort a [means of] preparation for the days of your tribulation.
15. Opportunities are things that are [meant to be] seized.
16. Loss [of opportunities] are [a cause of] distress.
17. Opportunity is a booty.
18. Loss [of opportunity leads to] burning regrets.
19. The lost [opportunity] does not return.
20. Losing an opportunity is distressful.
21. Times of happiness are short-lived.
22. Opportunities pass by like the passing of clouds.
23. When what you want does not happen, then want what happens [and be satisfied with it].
24. When the opportunity arises, then seize it, for indeed wasting an opportunity leads to distress.
25. Seize good opportunities, for indeed they pass by [quickly] like the passing of clouds.
26. The greatest distress is [caused by] loss of opportunities.
27. Verily that which has passed from your day has gone, and that which remains from it is not certain, so take advantage of your [present] time by performing [good] actions.
28. Verily opportunities pass away [quickly] like the clouds, so seize them when they arise in the gates of good, otherwise they will turn into regrets.
29. The fruit of loss [of opportunity] is regret.
30. For everything there is a passing away.
31. With loss there is regret.
32. There is no regret like loss [of an opportunity].
33. Preparation does not benefit when the time has elapsed.
34. What has passed of your day is lost, what is to come is uncertain; your time is a blessing, so make haste in it while you have the opportunity, and beware of relying on the future.
35. In loss [of opportunity] there is regret and (or) blame.
36. In every moment there is loss.
37. At times an opportunity may arise.
38. You will never attain that which has been taken away from you so be moderate in your acquisition.
39. Not every opportunity can be realized.
40. One who lets an opportunity pass by is crippled by its loss.
41. Whoever delays taking an opportunity at the right time, then let him be sure that he will lose it.
42. One who seizes the opportunity is saved from distress.
43. Not everything that disappears comes back.
44. One who tarries lets [the opportunity] go.

Notes

1. Or: At times an opportunity is realized.

498. THE OBLIGATORY AND RECOMMENDED ACTS

1. The one who seeks nearness [to Allah] by performing the obligatory and the recommended [acts], doubles his gain.
2. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has made the obligatory [acts] incumbent upon you, so do not neglect them; and has delimited boundaries for you, so do not transgress them; and has forbidden you from

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

certain things, so do not violate them; and has remained silent about certain things, though not out of forgetfulness, so do not undertake them.

3. Verily whoever busies himself with what is obligatory upon him instead of that which has been guaranteed for him, and is satisfied with what has been decreed for and against him; he will be the healthiest person in wellbeing, the most profiting from felicity and the most benefitting from happiness.
4. Verily if you were to occupy yourself with meritorious supererogatory acts instead of fulfilling the obligatory ones, then the merit you acquire will never make up for the religious obligation that you have neglected.
5. When recommended acts come in the way of obligatory actions, then abandon them.
6. It is upon you to preserve every matter that you cannot be excused for neglecting.
7. Fulfilling the obligatory is from the most noble of actions.
8. There is no worship like the performing of obligatory acts.
9. No closeness is achieved through recommended actions if they hamper the obligatory actions.
10. Do not perform a recommended act at the time of an obligatory one; start with the obligatory [prayer] and then pray whatever more you wish to.

499. NEGLECT

1. Be wary of neglect for verily it causes censure.
2. Neglect is an affliction of the capable.
3. The fruit of neglect is censure.
4. Counter neglect with judiciousness [and resoluteness].

500. IDLENESS

1. From idleness comes inclination towards [vain] desire.
2. With idleness there is inclination towards [vain] desire.

501. SEPARATION AND ISOLATION

1. 1. Beware of separation [from the people], for indeed the one who is isolated from the people is [a target] for Satan.
2. 2. Beware of separation, for indeed the one who is isolated from the people of truth is [prey] for Satan just as the lonely sheep is [prey] for the wolf.
3. 3. The worst endeavour is separating two close friends.
4. 4. For every gathering there is separation.
5. 5. Remain with the community and eschew separation.

502. FABRICATION OF LIES

1. Destroyed is the one who makes a [wrongful] claim, and unsuccessful is the one who fabricates [a lie].

503. CORRUPTION

1. One who is pleased by corruption is displeased by the Hereafter.
2. There is no rectitude with corruption.
3. One who corrupts [his relationship] with Allah will not be upright with anyone.
4. Do not corrupt the thing whose rectitude is important for you.

504. INDOLENCE AND LASSITUDE

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Indolence is deficiency.
2. Cure the ailment of lassitude in your heart through determination and the slumber of negligence in your eyes through alertness.

505. IGNOMINY

1. The shame of ignominy embitters the sweetness of pleasure.

506. VIRTUES AND VICES

1. Compel yourself to [acquire] virtues, for indeed you have a natural propensity for vices.
2. Ascending towards virtues is a hardship that saves.
3. Your knowledge conveys your merit and your generosity tells of your kindness.
4. When you keep away from the forbidden, refrain from that which you are unsure about, fulfil that which is obligatory and perform the acts that are recommended, then you have perfected the virtues of faith.
5. The peak of [all] merits is controlling anger and eradicating lustful desires.
6. During successive hardships the virtues of a person become manifest.
7. The symbol of a person's merit is his intelligence and good character.
8. The highest of all merits is intelligence.
9. The highest of all merits is knowledge.
10. The merit of a man is known from his speech.
11. Merit is [acquired] by perfection [of character] and noble deeds, not through excessive wealth and eminent feats.
12. Virtue is overcoming [one's bad] habit.
13. The pride of a man is by his merit, not because of his origin [and lineage].
14. The merit of a person is [lies in] doing good to others.
15. He who overcomes his anger and controls the impulses of his lustful desires has acquired virtue.
16. It suffices as a merit for a man to humble himself.
17. The perfection of virtues is [in] honourable qualities.
18. The human being has two merits: intellect and speech; he derives benefit through his intellect and benefits others by his speech.
19. Lineage is not defined by the fathers and mothers, rather [it is defined] by the praiseworthy merits.
20. One whose merits are few, his means are weak.
21. From the best of merits is accepting the excuse of the wrongdoer.
22. It is from the merit of a man not to put the one whom he has been forbearing with under obligation.
23. Performing good deeds and spreading goodness are from the greatest virtues.
24. Through the gaining of merits the enemy is subdued.
25. The consolidation of merits is in doing good to the freeman and being kind to the people of virtue.
26. Safeguarding the tongue and doing good to others are from the best merits of a human being.
27. Become distinguished by virtues and renounce vices.
28. The best of virtues is granting the wishes and fulfilling the needs of the seeker and being moderate in what one seeks.
29. The best of virtues is establishing ties with the one who has distanced
30. himself, being cordial with the one who is averse, and holding the hand of the one who stumbles.
31. Verily only the virtuous know the merit of the people of virtue.
32. Your virtue is proven by your action and your munificence by your open-handedness.

507. THE SUPERFLUOUS

1. The worst thing which a person occupies his time with is the superfluous.
2. The wastage of intellects is in seeking the superfluous.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Whoever restrains himself from the superfluous, his view is harmonized by the intellects.
4. Whoever occupies himself with the superfluous, the important matter that he hopes for eludes him.

508. ASTUTENESS

1. Astuteness is [gained] through discernment.
2. Astuteness is [a means of attaining] guidance.

509. LOSS

1. Loss is [a cause of] sorrows.

510. POVERTY

1. Poverty is beneficial for the believer, and gives him comfort from the jealousy of the neighbours, the flattery of the brothers and the domination of the ruler.
2. Verily poverty is disgracer for the soul, a confounder of the intellect, and a bringer of sorrows.
3. Poverty causes forgetfulness.
4. Poverty is the adornment of faith.
5. The grave is better than poverty.
6. Poverty with debt is [like] a red death.
7. Poverty disables the astute one from [presenting] his argument.
8. Poverty in one's homeland is like being a stranger in it.
9. Extreme poverty is better than disgraceful affluence.
10. True poverty and wealth are [determined] after presenting [the account of] one's deeds before Allah, the Glorified.
11. Love of poverty earns piety.
12. Many a poverty turns into with lasting affluence.
13. The disadvantage of poverty is more praiseworthy than the arrogant insolence of wealth.
14. Poverty of the soul is the worst poverty.
15. All [forms of] poverty can be redressed except the poverty of foolishness.
16. Whoever manifests his poverty, lowers his status.
17. The hardships of poverty are preferable to facing humiliation.
18. There is no poverty with good management.
19. The most apprising complaint is that which is enunciated by manifest affliction.
20. The little that one is in need of is better than the plenty that one is needless of.
21. There is no shame in being far away from one's hometown; the only shame is being indigent in one's one hometown.
22. One who pretends to be poor, becomes poor.
23. Displaying neediness gives rise to poverty.
24. Poverty with debt is the greatest wretchedness.

Notes

1. This is the poverty that one does not bear patiently and leads to wretchedness in this world and the next.
2. 'Red death' is a figure of speech that means a violent or bloody death.

511. THE PAUPER

1. The pauper who is satisfied is saved from the traps of Satan, whereas the rich person falls into his snares.
2. The most hated of servants in the sight of Allah are: the pauper who is haughty, the elderly fornicator and the immoral scholar.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. The most foolish of people is the arrogant pauper.
4. The richest people in the Hereafter are the poorest of them in this world.
5. The poor person is [like] a stranger (or is scorned) in his hometown.
6. The needy person is a stranger in his own homeland.
7. One who sits in the company of the poor increases in [his] gratitude.
8. Many a poor person is wealthier than all the rich people.
9. The wealth of a poor person is his contentment.
10. How many a poor person is needed by someone else.
11. How many a poor person is rich and [how many] a rich person is needy.
12. One who is overcome by poverty should frequently recite: There is no might and no power but by [the will of] Allah, the Most High, the Most Mighty.
13. It is obligatory on the poor that he should not put forward his request [to others] unless he has no other choice.
14. The kings of this world and the Hereafter are the poor who are satisfied [with what they have].
15. The poorest of people is one who is stingy with himself despite [his] wealth and affluence, and leaves it behind for others [in the end].
16. Many a poor person is mightier than a lion.

512. THE LEARNED SCHOLARS

1. The true scholar is one who neither makes people lose hope in the mercy of Allah nor cause them to despair of the comfort of Allah.
2. The bane of scholars is not safeguarding themselves [from error].
3. When the elevated one becomes learned, he shows humility.
4. When the vile one becomes a scholar, he considers himself to be above [others].
5. When you [wish to] learn, then become learned in the religion of Allah.

513. THINKING AND THE THINKER

1. Think and you will perceive.
2. The root of wisdom is reflection, and its fruit is wellbeing.
3. The root of safety from error is thinking before acting, and reflecting before speaking.
4. Verily the one who observes with his heart and acts with foresight begins his action by first looking at [the consequence of] his action, is it his favour or against him; if it is in his favour then he goes ahead with it and if it is against him then he holds back from [doing] it.
5. Thinking guides, truth saves.
6. Contemplation is worship.
7. Contemplation is [a means to] right guidance, heedlessness is [a cause of] loss.
8. Contemplation illuminates the mind.
9. The benefit of thinking is finding solutions.
10. Thinking guides [one] towards the way of right guidance.
11. Thinking is the recreation of the God-fearing.
12. Contemplation leads to gaining wisdom.
13. Thought is a gleaming mirror.
14. Thinking is the polish of the minds.
15. Thinking about the bounties of Allah is the best worship.
16. Thinking outside [the bounds of] wisdom is folly.
17. Thinking about good [action] invites one to act upon it.
18. Thinking about the consequences saves one from places of destruction.
19. When you precede all your actions with thought [and deliberation], your outcomes will be good in all matters.
20. By thinking, deliberation is improved.
21. By repeated thinking [and contemplation], doubt is dispelled.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

22. Through contemplation the darkness [and ambiguity] of matters get clarified.
23. By repeated thinking the outcomes become sound.
24. By considering the consequences, one is saved from harm.
25. Distinguishing the everlasting from the perishing is from the noblest discernment.
26. Think before you decide, consult before you proceed and ponder before you rush forward.
27. Your thinking leads to your gaining insight, and acquiring lessons [from the past].
28. The fruit of reflection is wellbeing.
29. Continuous reflection and caution protects from error and saves from the vicissitudes of time.
30. May Allah have mercy on the person who reflects and then takes lesson, and who takes lesson and hence perceives [the reality of things].
31. The cornerstone of insight is contemplation.
32. Deliberate before acting and you will be saved from error.
33. Deliberate before [taking] action [and] you will not be criticized for what you do.
34. The deliberation of the slow is better than the impulsiveness of the hasty.
35. Lengthy contemplation makes the end results praiseworthy and prevents the corruption of matters.
36. Lengthy contemplation improves the outcomes of planning.
37. Lengthy consideration equals [benefitting from] the opinion of the advisor.
38. You must reflect, as this is [means of] a guidance from error and a rectifier of deeds.
39. The thought of an intelligent person is guidance.
40. The thought of an ignorant person is misguidance.
41. Thinking for a short while is better than prolonged worship.
42. Your contemplation guides you to the right path and motivates you to improve your Hereafter.
43. A man's thinking is a mirror that shows him his good actions from his bad ones.
44. The merit of thinking and understanding is more beneficial than the merit of revision and study.
45. Your thinking about worship prompts you to act upon it.
46. Your thinking about sin drives you to fall into it.
47. So think, O people, and observe; take lesson and seek advice, and acquire provisions for the Hereafter, [for by this] you will attain felicity.
48. Measure and then cut, think and then speak, verify and then act.
49. How can the thought of one who is always sated be pure?
50. Contemplation is sufficient for right guidance.
51. Not everyone who shoots hits the target.
52. One who ponders [about the past] learns a lesson [from it].
53. One whose thinking is prolonged, his observation becomes good.
54. One whose thinking increases, his end result becomes good.
55. One whose thought is prolonged, his discernment becomes good.
56. One who puts his mind to work arrives at the correct answer.
57. One who thinks before acting, his accuracy increases.
58. One whose thinking is weak, his inattention [and gullibility] is strong.
59. One who reflects on the essence of Allah apostatizes.
60. One who thinks about the consequences is saved from [places of] destruction.
61. One who thinks a lot about sins is pulled towards [committing] them.
62. One who thinks a lot about [worldly] pleasures is overpowered by them.
63. One who reflects, perceives the outcomes.
64. One who keeps his mind's eye awake reaches the height of his endeavour.
65. One who reflects on the majesty of Allah loses hope.
66. One who thinks and reflects learns a lesson from everything.
67. He who excels in thinking never gets humiliated.
68. There is no worship like contemplation.
69. There is no [means to] right guidance like reflection.
70. One who does not take lessons [from the past] does not reflect.
71. Thinking about the consequences [of one's action] saves one from unpleasant calamities.
72. Thinking is one of the two means of guidance.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

73. Thinking about the kingdom of the heavens and earth is the worship of the sincere ones.
74. Thinking about a matter before undertaking it saves one from error.
75. Thinking leads to taking lesson, saves one from missteps and bears the fruit of precaution.
76. Reflect and you will awaken [and become alert].
77. Contemplation guides [one] to the right path.

514. SUCCESSFULNESS

1. One who is pleased by that which harms him will not be successful.
2. The successful one is he who [either] spreads his wings or remains peaceful and enjoys ease.

Notes

1. Meaning takes power through the support of those who are ready to fight alongside him for rightful cause.

515. LEAVING THE MATTER TO ALLAH

1. Whoever leaves his matter to Allah, He resolves it (for him).

516. UNDERSTANDING

1. Understanding is [achieved] through intelligence.
2. Understanding is a sign of knowledge.
3. One who tries to understand, understands.
4. One who tries to understand increases [his understanding].
5. One who understands learns the depth of knowledge.
6. One who is not granted understanding by Allah, the Glorified, does not benefit from the advice of any adviser.

7. One who possesses understanding does not become needy.

517. GRAVES

1. Stay near (or pass by) the graves and you will learn a lesson.
2. How excellent a son-in-law the grave is!

Notes

1. In the period of Jāhiliyya the Arabs would bury their daughters alive and say “We have married them to the grave.” Later, in the time of Islam, this expression was used in a general sense to remind people that they will eventually die and be lowered into their graves.

518. FACING ISSUES

1. One who faces [and anticipates] issues [with thought and reflection], perceives.

519. TURNING TOWARDS ALLAH

1. Verily if you turn towards Allah you have progressed, and if you turn away from Him, you have regressed.
2. By turning towards [Allah] misfortunes are warded off.
3. Making a good choice, doing good to the freemen and taking adequate precaution [or support] are from the signs of turning [to Allah].
4. For every advance [and progress] there is a retreat [and a regress].
5. One of the signs of turning [towards Allah] is doing good to the people.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

6. From the signs of turning [to Allah] are: correctness of speech and kindness in actions.

520. MARTYRDOM IN THE WAY OF ALLAH

1. Verily the most honourable of deaths is martyrdom. By He in whose hand my soul is, one thousand strikes with the sword are indeed easier [for me] than dying on the bed.

521. PLUNGING IN

1. One who plunges into the depths of the sea, drowns.

522. POWER AND MIGHT

1. Dominating the weak and the slave are from the exigencies (or wickedness) of power.
2. Power manifests the praiseworthy and blameworthy qualities [of an individual].
3. The bane of power is withholding favour.
4. The bane of might is aggression and defiance.
5. Power makes one forget [about] self-preservation.
6. When power increases, desire decreases.
7. When [one's] capability is reduced, the offering of excuses increases.
8. The alms-tax of power is even-handedness.
9. One of the best actions of the powerful person is for him to show forbearance when he is angry.

523. STATUS AND WORTH

1. One who does not know his worth, transgresses his limits.
2. One who remains within his rank [and does not overstep his limits] is honoured by the people.
3. One who oversteps his limits is humiliated by the people.
4. One who is ignorant about the place where he steps is made to stumble by the reasons of his regret.
5. One who limits himself to his [rightful] status, it will be more lasting for him.
6. One who is ignorant of his own worth does not know anyone's worth.
7. One who knows his worth is not disparaged among the people.
8. He who knows his worth does not get ruined.
9. He who oversteps his limits has not used his intellect.
10. How good it is for a servant to know his status and not to overstep his limits!
11. Ruined is the one who does not know his status.
12. Do not do that which will degrade your status.
13. There is no ignorance greater than transgressing [beyond] one's status.
14. One who transgresses his limits and his status has no intelligence.
15. May Allah have mercy on the one who knows his status and does not overstep his limits.
16. Do not rush to [occupy] the highest place in a gathering, for indeed the position that you are raised to is better than the position that you are lowered from.

524. UNDERTAKING

1. Do not undertake that which you are afraid of being incapable of.
2. Do not close a door which you are unable to open.

525. TO FOLLOW

1. When you are high, do not think of the one who is below you from the ignorant ones, rather follow [the example of] those who are above you from among the scholars.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

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A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. When you are unable to understand something with your intellect then follow the opinion of the intelligent one and he will remove your ignorance about it.

526. THE QUR'AN

1. The Qur'an is the better of the two forms of guidance.
2. Excel in your recitation of the Qur'an, for it is indeed the most beneficial (or the best) of stories, and seek cure from it, for it is the cure for [what is in] the breasts.
3. Follow the light that is not put out and the face that does not become old, and surrender and submit to its command, for indeed you will not go astray with submission [to it].
4. The best reminder is the Qur'an, through it the breasts are expanded and the souls are illuminated.
5. Verily the outer aspect of the Qur'an is elegant and its inner aspect is profound [in meaning]; its marvels do not end, its wonders do not cease, and the darkness [of ignorance and misguidance] is not removed except through
6. Verily this Qur'an is the adviser that does not deceive, the guide that does not lead astray and the speaker that does not lie.
7. Reflect upon the verses of the Qur'an and learn lessons from it, for indeed it is the best imparter of lessons.
8. Learn the Qur'an, for it is indeed the spring of the hearts and seek a cure from its light, for verily it is the cure of the hearts.
9. Hold fast to the rope of the Qur'an and take counsel from it, consider as permissible what it permits and forbidden what it forbids, and act on its injunctions and rulings.
10. The charm of the Qur'an are [in the surahs] al-Baqarah and Aal 'Imran.
11. He ('a) said about the Holy Qur'an: it is an intercessor whose intercession is accepted and it is a speaker whose speech is affirmed.
12. The outward aspect of the Qur'an is elegant and its inward aspect is profound.
13. You must take this Qur'an, accept what it has permitted, stay away from what it has forbidden, act on its definitive [and clear] verses and refer its unclear verses to the one who knows their meanings; for indeed it is a witness over you, and it is the best thing that you can petition with.
14. In the Qur'an is the information about what was before you, the news about what will come after you and the rulings regarding your present time.
15. The Qur'an is sufficient as a caller [towards the right path].
16. Let your nightly conversation partner be the Qur'an.
17. There is no poverty for anyone after the Qur'an nor is there any affluence for anyone before it.
18. One who feels at ease with the recitation of the Qur'an does not become lonely by the separation of his brothers.
19. One who takes the word of Allah as a guide is directed to that which is most upright.
20. One for whom the Qur'an intercedes on the Day of Judgment, its intercession for him is accepted, and one about whom it complains shall testify to [and affirm] it.
21. One who deems what the Qur'an has forbidden to be permissible does not believe in it.
22. None has sat in the company of this Qur'an but that he has risen with an increase or a decrease - an increase in guidance or a decrease in [spiritual] blindness.
23. He said about the Qur'an: It is a light for one who seeks illumination by it, a witness for one who disputes with it, a success for one who argues by it, knowledge for one who is attentive and a judgment for one who judges.
24. In describing the Qur'an [he said]: It is what prevents the desires
25. from deviating towards the forbidden and the uncertainties and opinions
26. from causing doubt.
27. In describing the Qur'an [he said]: It is the decisive word and not a jest. It is the articulator of the practice of justice and the enjoiner of virtue. It is the strong rope of Allah and the wise reminder. It is the trusted revelation of Allah and His strong rope. It is the spring of the hearts and the fountains of knowledge. It is the straight path. It is guidance for the one who follows it and an adornment for the

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

one who beautifies himself with it. It is a protector [from sin] for the one who seeks protection by it and a firm rope for the one who holds on to it.

28. Do not seek a cure from other than the Qur'an, for indeed it is a cure for all ailments.
29. He said describing the Qur'an: Its marvels do not end and its wonders do not cease, and doubts do not get cleared save by it.
30. The people of the Qur'an are the people of Allah and His special servants.

527. THE NEAR ONE

1. The near one may [at times] become distanced.

528. ATTAINING NEARNESS TO ALLAH

1. Attaining nearness to Allah is [achieved] by asking [from] Him and [gaining closeness] to the people is [achieved] by refraining from asking [them for anything].
2. Address your complaints to one who is capable of sufficing you.
3. Seek nearness to Allah, the Glorified, for verily He brings closer those who seek nearness to Him.
4. Seek nearness to Allah, the Glorified, through prostration (sujūd), bowing (rukū'), submission to His majesty and reverence (or subservience).
5. Nothing brings one closer to Allah, the Glorified, except copious prostration (sujūd) and bowing (rukū').

529. ADMISSION AND CONFESSION OF ONE'S SINS

1. How appropriate it is for one who knows his Lord to admit his sins.
 2. The best intercessor for a sinner is [his] admission [of guilt].
 3. There is no apology that wipes out sins more than admission [of one's guilt].
 4. Pardon bears more fruit with admission [of one's guilt] than it does with giving excuses.
 5. Confession is the intercessor of the wrongdoer.
6. Admission [of one's guilt] is [a means of] seeking pardon.

530. LENDING TO ALLAH

1. One who gives a loan to Allah is recompensed by Him.
2. Take benefit from the one who takes a loan from you in your time of prosperity so that you may take its repayment in your time of hardship.

531. KNOCKING THE DOOR

1. One who continues knocking the door insistently [eventually] enters through it.

532. THE [ALLOTTED] SHARE

1. The most bountiful share is good health.
2. The most pleasant share is contentment and good health.
3. The wealthiest of people is one who is pleased with what Allah has allotted to him.
4. By the measured apportionment of Allah for the servants, the balance of this world has been established and this world has been made complete for its inhabitants.
5. One who trusts in the allotment of Allah does not blame Him with regards to sustenance.
6. Do not put the worry of your [entire] year on your day. That which is apportioned for you each day suffices for you in it. Then if you are to live another year, verily Allah, the Glorified, will bring to you

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

what He has apportioned for you in each new day and if you will not live that long then why are you worried about that which is not for you?

533. HARD-HEARTEDNESS

1. Counter hard-heartedness with gentleness.
2. Hard-heartedness is from the greatest wretchedness.
3. There is no wickedness more ruthless than hard-heartedness.

534. GOALS

1. Lost is the one who has a goal other than Allah.
2. One whose goal is evil, his place of arrival [in the Hereafter] will be bad.

535. MODERATION

1. Moderation makes [that which is] little grow [and increase].
2. Moderation makes the small grow [big].
3. Moderation [in one's expenses] is half of livelihood.
4. The bane of moderation is stinginess.
5. Be moderate in [your] affairs, for whoever is moderate, the burden of his expenses is lightened.
6. Our way is moderation and our practice is right guidance.
7. You must be moderate in your affairs, for the one who deviates from moderation is unjust and one who takes to it is just.
8. Espouse moderation, for indeed it is the most helpful thing in attaining a fruitful life; and a person will never be destroyed until he prefers his lust over his faith.
9. Espouse moderation in food, for indeed it is farther from extravagance, healthier for the body and more assisting in the performance of worship.
10. The height of moderation is contentment.
11. Everything that exceeds moderation is extravagance.
12. One who is moderate will never be ruined.
13. There is no wastage in moderation.
14. One who does not practice moderation is ruined by extravagance.
15. Whoever is moderate, the burden of his expenses is lightened.
16. One who is moderate in [both] affluence and poverty has prepared himself for the calamities of time.
17. Whoever adopts moderation, it will make his prosperity last and will make up for his poverty and deficiency.
18. Being generous without extravagance and magnanimous without wastefulness is part of moderation.
19. There is no ruin with moderation.
20. Everything that one is contented with, suffices.
21. Let your riding mount be moderation and your goal be right guidance.

536. ONE WHO IS NEGLECTFUL AND FALLS SHORT

1. The tongue of the neglectful is short.
2. One who falls short is deficient.
3. One who is neglectful in his days of hope, before his death comes, has indeed made a loss in his life and is harmed by his death.

537. RETALIATION

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. The sword rents asunder and the religion joins together; for religion commands good and the sword forbids evil. Allah, the Exalted, says: Indeed in retaliation there is life for you.
2. And retaliation [has been ordained] as a prevention of bloodshed and the execution of punishments [has been ordained] for realising the importance of prohibitions.

538. DIVINE DECREE AND DESTINY

1. The most severely chastised of all people on the Day of Judgment will be the one who resents the decree of Allah.
2. Verily Allah, the Glorified, manages affairs in accordance with what He decrees, not according to what pleases you.
3. Verily Allah, the Exalted, does not give a servant more than what He has decreed for him in the Wise Reminder, even though his means [of seeking it] may be great, his craving for it intense and his stratagems for it strong; nor does the weakness of a person or the paucity of his means stand between him and what is ordained for him in the Wise Reminder. And indeed, the one who knows this and acts upon it will have the most comfort in benefit among all people, and verily the one who disregards it and doubts in it will have to face the most harm.
4. Divine decree works contrary to the estimations and planning [of the people].
5. Destiny overpowers the cautious.
6. Reliance on [divine] decree is more comforting.
7. Divine decree cannot be repelled by strength and struggle.
8. The impediments of divine decree are the bane of eminence.
9. When the destiny descends, caution becomes nullified.
10. When divine decree comes, the plans [of people] are nullified.
11. When destiny cannot be repelled, then cautiousness is futile.
12. Allah has set for everything a measure, and for every measure a [specified] term.
13. In the changes brought about by divine decree there is a lesson for the people of reason and intellect.
14. The verdict [of Allah] is precise and His knowledge is absolute.
15. Everything has a way out except [what has been decided by] divine decree.
16. How can one whose certitude is not true [and firm] be pleased with the divine decree?
17. One who seeks to overpower destiny is overcome by it.
18. One who is certain about destiny is not disturbed by what befalls him.
19. One who is pleased with what has been destined [for him] is not troubled by warning.
20. The tribulations of destiny overtake precaution.
21. The best expeller of distress is reliance on divine decree.
22. The descending of destiny overtakes precaution.
23. The descending of destiny blinds the sight.
24. Destiny comes to pass in accordance with divine decree, contrary to the choice and planning [of the people].
25. The worst of things is displeasure with the divine decree.
26. He ('a) was asked about destiny so he said: It is a dark path, so do not traverse it, and it is a deep sea, so do not dive into it, and it is a secret of Allah, the Glorified, so do not trouble yourself with [trying to understand] it.
27. Destiny overpowers precaution.

539. JUDGES

1. The most abominable (or divisive) thing is the injustice of judges.
2. The bane of judges is greed.
3. The worst of judges is one whose judgments are oppressive.
4. And he ('a) said about the one whom he dispraised: He is a dim-sighted person who frequently embarks on obscurities, an ignorant person who frequently embarks on unintelligent arguments, an

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

aggressor against his own soul and an embellisher of traversing the path of the impossible and vain trivialities for it.

5. One whose judgments are oppressive, his power comes to an end.

Notes

1. In his description of one who does not deserve to be a judge.

540. BEING CUT OFF FROM ALLAH

1. One who cuts himself off [from Allah and turns] towards other than Allah becomes wretched and faces hardship.

541. SITTING BACK

1. Many a person sits back from that which would delight him.

542. EMULATION

1. How great is the success of the one who follows in the footsteps of the Prophets!

543. THE HEART

1. It is forbidden upon every heart which is inclined to this world that God-wariness should reside in it.
2. Wage war against these hearts [and their desires], for indeed they are quick to stumble (or get obliterated).
3. Sadness of the hearts purges the sins.
4. When the heart is empty of God-wariness, it gets filled with the lures of this world.
5. Humble your heart with certitude, make it acknowledge the transience of this life, and make it see the calamities of this world.
6. The adornment of the hearts is sincerity of faith.
7. The worst of hearts is the one that doubts in its faith.
8. Blessed are those whose hearts are broken for the sake of Allah.
9. Blessed is the one who occupies his heart with reflection and his tongue with remembrance [of Allah].
10. Blessed is the one whose chest is void of rancour and whose heart is safe from deception.
11. Blessed is one in whose heart the coolness [and tranquillity] of certitude is made to enter.
12. Purify your hearts from the filth of evil deeds and your good deeds will be multiplied.
13. The strong muscles of the body and its height are of no benefit if the heart is empty.
14. Then listen attentively, O people, and open the ears of your hearts so that you may understand.
15. So his appearance is [in] the form of a human being but his heart is the heart of a beast.
16. The heart of a fool is in his mouth and the tongue of the intelligent one is in his heart.
17. The heart of a fool is behind his tongue, and the tongue of the intelligent one is behind his heart.
18. The pure hearts of the servants are places that Allah, the Glorified, looks upon [with His mercy]; so whoever purifies his heart, He will look upon it.
19. There are some evil thoughts that come into the hearts, but the intellects deter one from [acting upon] them.
20. Your heart must submit to Allah, the Glorified, for one whose heart submits, all the other parts of his body also submit.
21. Indeed there is a piece of flesh that has been placed inside this human being which is the most amazing thing in him, and that is his heart; it has sources of wisdom and things contrary to it. If hope enters it, covetousness humiliates it and if covetousness increases in it then greed destroys it. If despair takes control over it, grief kills it. If anger comes over it, its rage intensifies. If it is blessed with pleasure, it forgets precaution. If it is overcome by fear, it becomes preoccupied with caution. If peace

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

prevails around it, it becomes neglectful. If a hardship befalls it, impatience disgraces it. If it gains wealth, affluence makes it oppressive. If it faces indigence, distress overtakes it. If hunger attacks it, weakness disables it. If its eating increases, the heaviness of his stomach pains it. Thus every curtailment is harmful to it and every excess is injurious to it.

22. One whose heart is dead enters the fire [of hell].
23. Whoever keeps knowledge about Allah in his heart has accommodated independence from the creation of Allah in it.
24. Deaf is the heart that does not have an attentive ear.
25. Nothing comes forth from a sound heart except the direct meaning.
26. There is no good in a heart that does not surrender, an eye that does not shed tears and knowledge that does not benefit.
27. Verily there are evil thoughts that come into the hearts but the intellects deters one from [acting upon] them.
28. Verily these hearts are receptacles, and the best of them are those that are most receptive to good.
29. Verily these hearts grow weary just like bodies become weary, so seek out wise sayings for them.
30. Verily hearts have desire and aversion, an advancing and a retreating, so approach them from whence they advance and desire, for indeed when the heart is forced [to do anything] it becomes blind.
31. The heart is a spring of wisdom and the ear is the place where it sinks [and enters] in.
32. Enliven your heart with exhortations and kill it with asceticism, strengthen it with certitude and humble it with the remembrance of death, make it see the transience of this life and show it the calamities of the world.
33. Indeed destitution is an affliction, and worse than destitution is sickness of the body, and worse than bodily ailment is the sickness of the heart.
34. Where are the hearts that have been presented to Allah and have been bound to the obedience of Allah?
35. The most rancorous heart is the heart of the spiteful.
36. The best of hearts is a heart that has been filled with understanding.
37. Verily the heart has an advancing and a retreating, so when it advances then make it bear the [performance of] supererogatory acts, but when it retreats then make it suffice with the obligatory acts.
38. The heart is the treasurer of the tongue.
39. The heart is the book of reflection.
40. The hearts are locks and their keys are inquiry.
41. Verily the heart of a youth is like an empty [cultivation] land, it accepts anything that is sown in it.
42. The hearts of men are wild, so whoever shows them affection [and tames them], they turn towards him.

544. LITTLE

1. Little that is continuous is better than a lot that is discontinuous.
2. Having less is all right, but being humiliated, never!

545. THE LEAST

1. The least of things [required for salvation] is truthfulness and trustworthiness.

546. BEING LESS

1. One who is less [in generosity and affection] is abased.

547. QUNUT (RAISING HANDS IN SUPPLICATION)

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Prolonged qunūt and prostration saves one from the punishment of hellfire.

548. DESPAIR

1. I am amazed at the one who loses hope while he has with him salvation in the form of repentance.
2. Despair kills its owner.
3. Every despairing one has lost hope.

549. CONTENTMENT AND THE CONTENTED

1. The contented one is saved from the woes of covetousness.
2. Be content and you will gain honour.
3. Be content with what you are given and you will be made sufficient.
4. Be content with little from your worldly possessions for the safety of your religion, for indeed the believer is satisfied with the little that he gets of this world.
5. The wealthiest of all people is the contented one.
6. A slave is free as long as he is content and a freeman is a slave as long as he covets.
7. Contentment is the helper of poverty.
8. Contentment is the most lasting honour.
9. The most at ease among the people is the contented one.
10. Contentment is the sign of the God-wary.
11. Contentment is the [path to the] most comfortable lifestyle.
12. Contentment is honour and prosperity.
13. Contentment is a sword that does not get blunt.
14. Contentment is the cornerstone of prosperity.
15. Contentment leads to honour.
16. Contentment and obedience bring about prosperity and honour.
17. Contentment is continence.
18. Contentment is a blessing.
19. Contentment is honour.
20. The contented one is rich, even if he is hungry and unclothed.
21. There is no contentment with avarice.
22. If you are content, you will gain honour.
23. Verily you are in greater need of being content with a little sustenance than being greedy of acquiring more.
24. Verily if you become contented you will gain independence [and affluence] and the burden of worldly provisions will become lighter for you.
25. When you are deprived, then be content [with what you have].
26. When you seek wealth, then seek it through contentment.
27. Through contentment there is honour.
28. The fruit of contentment is prosperity.
29. The fruit of contentment is being moderate in earning [one's livelihood] and refraining from asking [others].
30. The fruit of contentment is honour.
31. The goodness of contentment stems from continence.
32. It is enough of contentment for you to suffice with what Allah, the Glorified, has apportioned for you.
33. Preserving that which is in your possession is better for you than seeking that which is in someone else's possession.
34. Blessed is the one who covers himself with contentment and keeps away from extravagance.
35. Blessed is the one who fears the punishment [of the Hereafter], works for the Reckoning, espouses continence, is content with what suffices [him] and is pleased with [the decree of] Allah, the Glorified.
36. You must have contentment, for indeed there is nothing that wards off poverty more than it.
37. Contentment is proportionate to the degree of continence.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

38. In contentment there is prosperity.
39. The one who is content has gained honour.
40. Contentment has been paired with prosperity.
41. Every contented one is continent.
42. Contentment is enough of a possession.
43. Be contented and you will become rich.
44. Contentment will never be attained until greed is lost.
45. One who is not satisfied with the little that he gets has not adorned himself with contentment.
46. One who is content becomes rich [and independent].
47. One who is content gets satiated.
48. One who makes himself content becomes contented.
49. One who is content does not get depressed.
50. Whoever is content, his worship becomes good.
51. Whoever is content, his greed becomes less.
52. One who is contented with the allotment of Allah becomes needless.
53. One who is not satisfied with what has been decreed for him faces hardship.
54. One who lacks contentment is not made affluent by riches.
55. One from whom contentment turns away is not enriched by wealth.
56. One who is content with the sustenance of Allah has no need for the creation.
57. One who is granted contentment is preserved by it.
58. One whose soul is contented remains dignified even in hard times.
59. One who is contented is spared from the humility of asking [others].
60. Whoever clings to contentment, his poverty disappears.
61. One who desires the blessings of the Hereafter is contented with the little [he has] of this world.
62. One who is contented with the allotment of Allah becomes needless of the people.
63. One who suffices with little becomes needless of plenty.
64. One of the most honourable morals is adorning oneself with contentment.
65. Remaining contented is from the noble endeavours.
66. How good it is for a person to be contented with little and generous with much!
67. The best fortune is contentment.
68. The best attribute is contentment.
69. One who has been granted contentment has acquired honour.
70. There is no treasure like contentment.
71. Contentment is the better of the two riches.
72. Contentment is the better of the two forms of continence.
73. Indeed contentment and overcoming lustful desires are from the greatest forms of abstinence.
74. The most helpful thing in reforming the self is contentment.
75. Verily in contentment there is prosperity.
76. Contentment enriches.
77. Every contented one is rich.
78. One whose contentment increases, his submissiveness [to the people] decreases.
79. One who is content gains honour and becomes independent.
80. None has more honour than the contented one.
81. Contentment is the symbol of satisfaction [with Allah's decree].
82. The honour of contentment is better than the humiliation of subordination.
83. There is no wealth like contentment.

Notes

1. Meaning that it makes poverty easier to bear.

550. ACQUISITIONS

1. Acquisitions are [a cause of] sorrows.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Acquisitions are deprivation [from peace of mind].
3. Acquisitions bring about sadness.
4. Acquisitions are a spring of sorrows.
5. Acquisitions are the spoils of disasters.
6. The discarding of hardships [one endures for attaining worldly gain] is the best of acquisitions.
7. To the extent of [one's] acquisitions, sorrow and grief is multiplied.
8. The fruit of acquisitions is sorrow.

551. SPEECH AND SPEAKING

1. Speech is between two bad qualities, namely: too much and too little; too much [of it] is babble and too little is inarticulateness and speechlessness.
2. Speaking too much makes the wise one stumble and makes the tolerant one weary, therefore do not talk so much that others get fed up and do not be so reticent that you are humiliated.
3. Speech is in your control as long as you have not uttered it, but once you utter it you become shackled by it.
4. Speech is like medicine, a little of it is beneficial but too much of it can be fatal.
5. Reduce [your] speech and you will be safe from blame.
6. Reduce your speech and you will remain safe from censure.
7. Beware of offensive speech for indeed it fills the hearts with spite [and hatred].
8. Beware of excessive speech for indeed it increases errors and brings about weariness.
9. Beware of excessive [and impertinent] speech, for indeed it manifests your hidden flaws and provokes your silent enemies.
10. Beware of speech which is offensive, for indeed it confines you to [the company of] vile people and repels the honourable ones from you.
11. Beware of speaking about something whose way you are unfamiliar with and whose reality you are unaware of, for indeed your speech indicates your intellect, and your expression informs about your level of understanding, so limit your long tongue to that which keeps you safe, and make your speech concise to [the extent of] what is deemed good, for indeed this is more beautiful for you and more indicative of your merit.
12. There is no benefit in speech without action.
13. The most veracious speech is that which conforms to the truth.
14. The best of utterances is that which is affirmed by action.
15. The people who most resemble the Prophets of Allah are those who speak the truth the most and are most patient in acting upon it.
16. The closest of servants to Allah, the Glorified, is one who speaks the truth even if it is against him and one who acts upon the truth even if there is something he dislikes in it.
17. It is worse than inarticulateness for one to speak more than [what] is necessary.
18. The most accurate shot is speech that is prudent.
19. The best speech is that which is adorned by good arrangement and understood by [both] the elite and the general public.
20. The most conveying eloquent speech is that which is easily passed on [and understood] correctly and which is appropriately concise.
21. The most honourable speech is the truth.
22. The best speech is that which is not dismissed by the ears and is not difficult for the minds to comprehend.
23. Verily polite speech and the propagation of peace are forms of worship.
24. Indeed the preference of speech over action is a shortcoming, and the preference of action over speech is indeed a beauty and an adornment.
25. The practice of the wicked is [using] vulgar speech.
26. The one who listens to obscene speech is a partner of the speaker.
27. Bad speech degrades one's prestige and magnanimity.
28. Offensive speech degrades one's status and corrupts brotherhood.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

29. The worst speech is that which contradicts itself.
30. The worst of narrations is one that has the most falsehood.
31. I am amazed at the one who speaks about that which neither benefits him in this world nor for which reward is written for him in the Hereafter.
32. Eschew speaking about that which you do not know, and making statements about that which you are not responsible for, and hold yourself back from a path when you fear its deviation.
33. Many an utterance is hurtful.
34. Many an utterance is like a [sharp] sword.
35. Many an utterance has taken away a blessing.
36. Many a syllable has brought death.
37. Many an utterance is more severe than an assault.
38. Many a strife has been instigated by a word.
39. Many a speech is such that the [appropriate] reply for it is silence.
40. Many an utterance is such that silence is better than it.
41. Many a war has been started because of a [single] word.
42. Many a word is more piercing than an arrow.
43. Think and then speak, [for by this] you will remain safe from error.
44. Speech may, at times, be harmful.
45. Speaking less hides [one's] faults and decreases [one's] sins.
46. Speaking less conceals shameful flaws and keeps one safe from missteps.
47. Reduce your speech and shorten your hopes.
48. How many a war has been started by a single word.
49. How many a word has taken away a blessing.
50. Too much talking makes the ear weary.
51. Excessive talking makes one's brothers fed up.
52. Excessive speech is such that its marginal issues are expanded and its meanings are reduced, so no end is seen for it and nobody benefits from it.
53. For every statement there is a reply.
54. One who speaks less, his sins are less.
55. One whose speech is less, his fault is nullified.
56. One who speaks that which he ought not to, hears that which he does not like.
57. One who makes his speech prudent proves the abundance of his merit.
58. One whose speech is good, success is in front of him.
59. One whose speech is bad, his censure increases.
60. One whose speech is accompanied by modesty, corruption [and destruction] is removed from his action.
61. One who talks a lot increases his babble and one who jokes a lot increases his silliness.
62. One who does not make his speech appropriate (or is not able to bear [others'] speech) does not hear beautiful words.
63. One whose words are evil, his lot will be evil.
64. The place where speech is infixed is the heart, its repository is the mind, its strengthener is the intellect, its initiator is the tongue, its form is letters, its soul is [its] meaning, its adornment is [correct] syntax and its order is appositeness.
65. Never say anything the reply for which will hurt you.
66. Do not speak that which you fear others will consider a lie.
67. Do not speak of everything you know, for that is [itself] a sufficient ignorance.
68. Do not look at who has spoken, look at what he has said.
69. Do not say that which will make your burden [of sin] heavy.
70. Do not speak of that which you do not know, for indeed most of the truth lies in that which you do not know.
71. Do not relate to the people all that you hear, for this suffices as silliness (or foolishness).
72. Do not contest all that the people relate to you, for this suffices as foolishness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

73. Never say that which conforms to your vain desire, even if you say it playfully or assume it to be idle talk, for many a playful talk may alienate a freeman from you and [many] an idle talk may bring evil [consequences] upon you.
74. Never speak when you cannot find an appropriate situation to speak.
75. Never debate except with one who is fair and never guide anyone but the seeker of guidance.
76. Do not talk so much that you annoy others and do not speak so less that you fall [in the eyes of others].
77. Never say that which you do not do, for indeed you will never become free of the failure that attaches itself to you and the blame that you earn.
78. Do not say that which you do not know, for indeed Allah, the Glorified, has prescribed obligations upon all your body parts which He will use as proof against you.
79. Let not what people say about you dishearten you, for indeed if what they say is true then it is a sin whose punishment has been expedited and if it is not true then it is [as] a good deed that you have not performed [but has been recorded in your book of deeds].
80. Do not be, in that which you mention, like the one who collects firewood at night or like the froth over the flood.
81. Do not say that which you do not know, thereby making others suspicious of your statements about what you do know.
82. None is careful of evil in his actions but he who is careful of evil in his speech.
83. Good speech is not completed except by good action.
84. Words are the moulds of meanings.
85. The elocution of a man apprises of the strength of his heart.
86. Speak and you will be known, for indeed a man is concealed under his tongue.
87. Beautiful speech is proof of abundant intelligence.
88. Preservation of that which is in the vessel is [achieved] by fastening the cover.
89. Deliberation [and carefulness] in speech saves one from faltering and error.
90. Speaking the truth is better than inarticulateness and silence.
91. If you would like to remain safe and conceal your faults, then reduce your speech and increase your silence, [by this] your thinking will abound, your heart will become illuminated and people will remain safe from you.
92. I am more capable of turning away that which I haven't spoken than I am of taking back that which I have said.
93. Verily you are accountable for your speech, so do not say anything except [that which is] good.
94. The bane of transmission is distortion of the narration.
95. The bane of speech is lying.
96. The bane of speech is prolongation.
97. When you speak, be truthful.
98. When you relate [something], be truthful.
99. When speech is reduced, accuracy is increased.
100. Be pleased with what you say if it is free from mistakes.
101. Reduce your speech and shorten your hopes, and do not say that which will earn you sin or will alienate a freeman from you.
102. Be cautious of every statement or action that will lead to the spoiling of your Hereafter and religion.
103. The best speech is that which is pertinent.
104. Be good in your speech, beautiful in your actions, for indeed the speech of a person is the evidence of his merit and his action is the symbol of his intellect.
105. The speech of a man is the measure of his intellect.
106. Your speech is recorded, forever to remain in your book of deeds, so make it about that which brings you closer [to Allah] and beware of uttering that which will destroy you.
107. When the intellects decrease, impertinent speech increases.
108. When you make your speech good, then make your action good also so that you can bring together excellent speech with virtuous benevolence.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

109. When the speech corresponds to the intention of the speaker, the listener accepts it but when it is against his intention, it does not take up a good position in his heart.
110. Through moderate [and unbiased] speech loftiness is affirmed.
111. Whoever speaks too much, others get fed up with him.
112. When you are overcome by speech then be careful not to be overcome by silence.
113. I am amazed at the one who speaks about that which, if it is related from him, will harm him and if it is not related from him, will not benefit him.
114. For every situation there is an appropriate thing to say.
115. Speech has some banes.
116. Speech will never be beneficial unless it is joined with action.
117. One who increases [his talk] makes others weary.
118. One whose speech is polite, loving him becomes unavoidable.
119. One whose speech is excessive, his lapses increase.
120. Whoever reviews his speech, his mistakes reduce.
121. One whose speech is excessive is never free from lapses.
122. One who knows that he is accountable for his speech should shorten his speech.
123. The worst of speech is babble.
124. Excessive speech is annoying.
125. Deliberation in speech saves one from error.
126. The best speech is that which is neither boring [because of its length] nor too brief.
127. The best speech is truth.
128. Eschew speech about that which does not concern you, and in situations that are inappropriate, for many a word has taken away a blessing and [many] an utterance has brought about bloodshed.

552. STEADFASTNESS

1. Steadfastness is safety.
2. There is no path that is nobler than steadfastness.
3. There is no course more secure than steadfastness.
4. How can the heart of one whose faith is not steadfast be upright?
5. One who remains steadfast is not bereft of safety.

553. ESTABLISHING THE COMMAND OF ALLAH

1. The command of Allah, the Glorified, is not established [and executed] except by one who neither corrupts nor beguiles, nor is he deceived by [that which he] desires.

554. THE STRONG

1. A strong person is one who subdues his pleasures.
2. The bane of the strong person is underestimating the enemy.
3. When you [wish to] become strong, then be strong in the obedience of Allah, the Glorified.

555. ARROGANCE

1. Arrogance is an inviter towards plunging into sins.
2. Arrogance is a destructive trait, one who seeks to increase by it, diminishes.
3. Arrogance grips the hearts just like a fatal poison.
4. Suppress the manifestations of pride and restrain the flashes (or risings) of arrogance.
5. Beware of arrogance, for it is the cornerstone of tyranny and disobedience to the Most Merciful.
6. Beware of arrogance, for indeed it is the greatest of sins and the vilest of faults, and it is the ornament of the Devil.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Beware of behaving haughtily with the servants of Allah, for every haughty one is crushed by Allah.
8. The ugliest character is arrogance.
9. The lowliest of all people is one who considers himself to be great.
10. Arrogance humiliates.
11. Arrogance degrades the elevated.
12. Arrogance shows [one's] depravity.
13. Arrogance is the worst of faults.
14. Arrogance is the same as foolishness.
15. Seeking honour [for oneself] through arrogance is [a cause of] humiliation.
16. Being arrogant about [one's status in] this world is deficiency.
17. Arrogance is the basis of ruin.
18. Arrogance is the great trap of the Devil.
19. Verily, if you become arrogant, Allah will abase you.
20. The bane of nobility is arrogance.
21. Due to arrogance there is loathing.
22. Through increased arrogance, loss [and ruin] comes about.
23. The arrogance of a man abases him.
24. The arrogance of a lowly person invites his insult.
25. The fruit of arrogance is vituperation.
26. The worst of morals is arrogance.
27. The worst of all woes of the intellect is arrogance.
28. Counter arrogance with humility.
29. Fear Allah O servants of Allah; do not put on the garment of arrogance, for indeed arrogance is the greatest trap of the Devil which he grips the hearts just as fatal poisons [rush through the body and] overcome
30. Arrogance is sufficient as a [cause of] loss [and destruction].
31. Arrogance is enough as an abasement.
32. If Allah were to make arrogance permissible to any one of His creation He would make it permissible to His Prophets, but He made it hateful for them to be arrogant and approved of their humility.
33. One who shows haughtiness is crushed.
34. From the ugliest forms of arrogance is a man's arrogance towards his close relatives and members of his [own] tribe.
35. Nothing brings hatred like arrogance does.
36. Never turn your face away disdainfully and be courteous [to others]; and be humble in front Allah, who has elevated you.
37. There is no praise with arrogance.
38. There is no quality uglier than arrogance.
39. It does not behove one who knows Allah to become haughty.

556. THE ARROGANT ONE

1. The haughty oppressor is destroyed by his sins.
2. I am amazed at the arrogant one who was [nothing but] a drop of semen yesterday and will tomorrow be [just] a corpse.
3. At times the haughty one is humiliated.
4. Every arrogant one is low.
5. The arrogant one has no friend.
6. One who becomes arrogant is abased.
7. One who shows arrogance is loathed.
8. One who is arrogant towards the people gets humiliated.
9. One who is haughty with the one who is below him gets broken [and pulled down from his position].
10. One who is arrogant will not be devoid of loss [and injury].
11. Whoever shows haughtiness, Allah belittles him and abases him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

12. One who wears the attires of arrogance and extravagance takes off the attires of merit and honour.
13. None is arrogant except the vile.
14. The actions of a haughty person are not pure [and righteous].
15. No one shows arrogance but the vile, unknown one.

557. THE BOOK AND WRITING

1. The book is one of the two interlocutors.
2. When you write something then take another look at it before putting a seal on it, for indeed [by putting a seal on it] you are only putting a seal on your intellect [as your intelligence will be gauged by your writing].
3. The writing of a man is the symbol of his intellect and the evidence of his merit.
4. The writing of a person is the gauge of his merit and the measure of his nobility.
5. How good an interlocutor a book is!
6. Writing is the interpreter of intention.
7. Books are the gardens of scholars.
8. Whoever takes solace [and delight] in [reading] books will never lack [any] solace.

558. SECRECY

1. Secrecy is the basis of conversations.

559. LOQUACIOUSNESS

1. Loquaciousness has been paired up with boredom.
2. One who is loquacious is abandoned.
3. One who talks too much makes others fed up.
4. One who speaks too much [makes] blunders.
5. One who speaks too much gets rebuked more.
6. One who does too much of something is known by it.

560. AMASSING [WEALTH]

1. Amassing that which does not last for you and for which you will not remain is from the greatest ignorance.

561. LYING

1. Lying destroys the one who accompanies it and saves the one who eschews it.
2. Lying is [a cause of] disgrace in this world and [leads one to] hellfire in the Hereafter.
3. The most repulsive quality is dishonesty.
4. Lying is treachery.
5. Lying makes one fall [into destruction].
6. Lying is the enemy of truthfulness.
7. Dishonesty is a disgraceful flaw.
8. Lying is alien to [and incompatible with] faith.
9. Lying is disgrace and treachery (and regret).
10. Lying degrades a person.
11. Lying leads to slander.
12. Lying tarnishes one's character.
13. Lying corrupts everything.
14. Lying destroys you even if you are [apparently made] safe by it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

15. The ugliest thing is falsehood.
16. Lying leads to hypocrisy.
17. Lying is the disgrace of the tongue.
18. Lying and treachery are not from the qualities of the honourable.
19. Lying is the deviation of speech from the divine order [of creation].
20. It is through lying that the hypocrites adorn themselves.
21. How evil a speech lying is!
22. The fruit of lying is disgrace in this world and chastisement in the Hereafter.
23. Eschew lying for indeed it alienates one from faith.
24. The sickness of dishonesty is the worst sickness and the lapse of the cautious one is the gravest lapse.
25. The consequence of lying is rebuke and regret.
26. Lying is the corruption of [one's] prestige.
27. And [Allah has ordered the] abandoning of lying as a means of honouring the truth.
28. A person may lie about himself regarding that which he did not do when he is faced with severe tribulation.
29. Excessive lying leads to slander.
30. Excessive lying takes away a person's prestige.
31. Excessive lying corrupts the religion and increases the [burden of] sin.
32. Telling lies is not from the moral teachings of Islam.
33. How repulsive is dishonesty by the people of virtue!
34. The spoiler of knowledge is dishonesty and the spoiler of seriousness is idle play.
35. Lying and magnanimity don't go together.
36. There is no trait more repulsive than lying.
37. The most prevalent thing [among the people] is lying and treachery.

Notes

1. Or: ...dishonesty to the people of virtue.

562. THE LIAR

1. The [one who is known to be a] incessant liar is suspected in his speech, even if his proof is strong and his tone is truthful.
2. The incessant liar and the dead are similar, for indeed (or because) the merit of the living over the dead is the ability to rely on him, so if his words are not reliable then [it is as if] his life is nullified.
3. The furthest of all people from goodness is the incessant liar and the brazen-faced.
4. The liar is disgraced and humiliated.
5. A liar is at the brink of an abyss [of ruin] and disgrace.
6. Your knowing that you are a liar suffices as a rebuke for lying.
7. There is no trustworthiness in an incessant liar and there is no safeguarding [from sin] in the morally corrupt.
8. One who lies corrupts his magnanimity.
9. One who lies excessively is not believed.
10. One who is known for lying, [even] his truth will not be accepted.
11. One whose lying increases, his prestige decreases.
12. One who is known for lying, the trust [of others] in him decreases.
13. One who eschews lying, his words are accepted as true.
14. From the disgrace of the incessant liar is his readiness to swear [that he is truthful] for one who does not [even] ask him to swear.
15. The habitual liar has no shame.
16. There is no good in the words of liars.
17. There is no good in the knowledge of habitual liars.
18. There is neither any good in those who are habitual liars nor is there any good in dishonest scholars.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. The liar earns three things by his lies: the wrath of Allah upon him, scorn of the people and hatred of the angels.

563. NOBLENES AND MUNIFICENCE

1. Being noble-minded means having a good character and eschewing lowly traits.
2. Munificence is [in] giving generously and fulfilling promises.
3. Nobleness is [in] preferring the pleasantness of praise over the love of wealth.
4. The best munificence is altruism.
5. The highest level of munificence is self-sacrifice.
6. The most excellent munificence is completing [one's] favours.
7. Munificence is excellence and loyalty is nobility.
8. Nobleness is the source of goodness.
9. Munificence is the best eminence.
10. Munificence is the best of traits.
11. Nobleness is [being] free from jealousy.
12. Nobleness is bearing the wrongdoings [of others].
13. Nobleness is having good patience [and tolerance].
14. Munificence is bearing the [heavy] burdens of [other people's] liabilities.
15. Nobleness is preferring dignity over wealth.
16. Nobleness is [being] more compassionate than close relatives.
17. Nobleness is control over one's tongue and doing good to others.
18. Nobleness is the result of lofty endeavour [and high resolve].
19. Nobleness is nothing but refraining from [committing] sins (or misdeeds).
20. Munificence is nothing but granting the wishes and fulfilling the needs of the seeker.
21. The fruit of nobleness is keeping ties with near relatives.
22. The best munificence is being generous without seeking [any] recompense.
23. It is not from munificence to spoil the favours [one does to others] by [putting them under] obligation.
24. Completion of favours is part of munificence.
25. It is part of nobleness to have good [and praiseworthy] traits.
26. Completing [one's] favours is from the perfection of munificence.
27. Fulfilling one's obligations [and pacts] is part of nobleness.
28. Doing good to the one who wrongs you is from the best [forms of] nobleness.
29. One of the signs of nobleness is hastening in [giving] reward.
30. Part of nobleness is doing good to others and granting [them] support.
31. From the perfection of munificence is hastening [to give] reward.
32. It is from nobleness for you to overlook the wrong that has been done to you.
33. The order of nobleness entails successively doing good to others and
34. assisting one's brothers [financially].
35. The nobleness of a man is evinced by his cheerfulness and his kindness [to others].

564. THE NOBLE -MINDED AND MUNIFICENT

1. The noble-minded person is one who keeps away from the forbidden and steers clear of [disgraceful] flaws.
2. The munificent person is one who brings [and gives away] whatever is available.
3. A noble-minded person is one who repays evil with good.
4. A noble-minded person is repulsed by that which the wicked take pride in.
5. The munificent one cuts off his favour when he is approached harshly and is soft [and kind] when he is entreated [politely].
6. When a noble-minded person is able [to take revenge] he forgives, and when he gains possession [of something] he grants generously, and when he is asked [for something] he accords [it].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. A noble-minded person rejects disgrace and honours his neighbour.
8. A noble-minded person considers his virtuous actions as a debt that he has to repay.
9. The noble-minded person raises himself above [the expectation of] rewards in everything good that he does.
10. When a noble-minded person needs you he excuses you [from helping him] and when you need him he suffices you.
11. The noble-minded person forgives despite having the power [to exact revenge], is just in his rule, restrains his harm [from others] and bestows [favours] generously.
12. The noble-minded person is felicitous and worthy of reward in the sight of Allah, and is loved and venerated in the sight of the people.
13. A noble-minded person is one who safeguards his honour with his wealth while the wicked person is one safeguards his wealth by [sacrificing] his honour.
14. Be cautious of the noble-minded person when you offend him, and the forbearing one when you injure him, and the courageous one when you torment him.
15. Be cautious of the assault of the noble-minded person when he is hungry and the insolence of the wicked one when he is satiated.
16. Be cautious of the authority of the noble-minded person when he is humiliated and the vehemence of the wicked one when he is elevated [to a position of power].
17. The noble-minded person feigns inattention and pretends to be deceived.
18. Noble-minded people have the most patient souls.
19. The noble-minded person makes [his] ownership righteous.
20. A noble-minded person is one who initiates his act of kindness [before it is requested of him].
21. The noble-minded person shows gratitude for little whereas the wicked one is ungrateful for much.
22. The munificent person is one whose giving precedes his being asked.
23. When the noble-minded person promises [something], he keeps his promise and when he threatens [to punish], he forgives.
24. When the munificent person is well-to-do, he fulfils the needs [of others] and when he faces hard times, he lightens the burden of others [by not seeking their assistance].
25. When the core of a man is noble, [both] his absence and presence are [considered] noble.
26. The authority of a noble-minded person manifests his positive attributes.
27. The possessor of noble-mindedness has beautiful traits, grants favours [to others] and keeps ties with near relatives.
28. The success of a noble-minded person brings deliverance.
29. The success of noble-minded people is [through] forgiveness and benevolence.
30. The shadow of noble-minded people is vast and pleasant.
31. In times of [their] altruism, the excellence of the noble-minded people become manifest.
32. Generosity is the habit of the noble-minded people.
33. Doing good to others is the habit of noble-minded people.
34. Be cautious of the noble-minded person if you offend him, and of the wicked one if you honour him and of the forbearing one if you force him into a difficult position.
35. The merit of initiating good deeds and performing generous acts belongs to the noble-minded people.
36. The one who has honoured you has made you uncomfortable if you are noble-minded and the one who has offended you has made you comfortable if you are forbearing.
37. Indeed I am happier to [get to] know a noble-minded person than to acquire an expensive and precious jewel.
38. It is not the habit of noble-minded people to delay bounties.
39. Being hasty in taking revenge is not from the traits of noble-minded people.
40. Remaining alongside a noble-minded person in humiliation is better than accompanying the wicked in order to gain favour.
41. The pleasure of the noble-minded people is in feeding [others] whereas the pleasure of the wicked people is in eating [themselves].
42. One of the most honourable actions of the noble-minded person is feigning inattention towards that which he knows.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

43. Giving generously is from the traits of the munificent.
44. The munificent person is never deserted.
45. The propensity of a noble-minded person is always towards the [positive] traits of his forefathers.
46. The happiness of noble-minded people is in giving generously [to others] while the joy of the wicked is in evil retribution.
47. A high-minded person is never spiteful.
48. None deserves to be called munificent except the one who gives before he is asked.
49. A person does not ennoble himself until he belittles his wealth.
50. The munificent person is one who bestows his favours generously [to others].
51. It is not from the traits of a noble-minded person to wear the cloak of disgrace.
52. The noble-minded one is bright whereas the wicked one is immature.

565. HIGH ESTEEM

1. One who is not set aright by high esteem is put right by indignity.
2. One who is not reformed by high esteem is reformed by indignity.
3. It is a right upon one whose esteem has been increased by Allah that he should [in turn] be more respectful to the people.
4. One who is raised by disgrace is made vain by high esteem.

566. NOBLE TRAITS & DEEDS

1. When you desire to acquire noble traits then keep away from the forbidden.
2. Rush towards noble deeds, make haste in bearing the liabilities [of others] and hurry to fulfil the needs of the one who is unaware [of your assistance], your reward will thus be good in both abodes, and you will acquire a great prize from Allah.
3. Work hard to acquire noble traits and bear the burden of [others'] liabilities, [as a result] you will achieve the greatest gains.
4. The best of noble traits is altruism.
5. End your day's work with noble deeds and begin the night by fulfilling the needs of the one who is asleep [and unaware of your assistance].
6. Acquire noble traits and do good to the people, for indeed these two things protect one from falling into difficulties and lead to loftiness.
7. The pinnacle of noble traits is altruism.
8. From the best noble deeds is bearing the liabilities [and debts of others] and being hospitable to one's guests.
9. One of the best noble deeds is spreading goodness [and virtue].
10. One of the best noble deeds is keeping away from the forbidden.
11. Noble traits [and deeds] are not complete except with chastity and
12. self-sacrifice.
13. Noble traits are [attained] by [bearing] that which is disliked.

567. THE DISLIKED

1. The disliked act which has a praiseworthy result is better than the action which one loves [but] whose outcome is dispraised.

568. EARNINGS

1. The purest of earnings is lawful earning.
2. The worst kind of earning is the unlawful [earning].
3. Embarking on the terrifying [and surmounting one's fears] brings wealth.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. One who earns by unlawful means accumulates sins.

569. LAZINESS AND THE LAZY

1. One who is always lazy, his hopes get dashed.
2. Do not rely on a lazy person in your affairs.

570. REVEALING & REMOVING DISTRESS

1. One who reveals his distress to others has accepted humiliation.
2. No action is more beloved to Allah, the Most High, than for a person to remove the distress [and adversity] from another person.

571. SUPPRESSING ANGER

1. The suppressor of anger is one who extirpates his grudges.
2. Suppress [your] anger and you will increase in forbearance.
3. Suppression [of anger] is the fruit of forbearance.
4. The cornerstone of forbearance is suppression [of anger].
5. Blessed is the one who suppresses his anger and does not let it loose, and [who] disobeys the command of his [carnal] soul and thus is not destroyed by it.
6. How many a time is anger suppressed out of the fear of that which is more severe than it.
7. Whoever suppresses his anger, his forbearance becomes complete.
8. Suppress [your] rage when you are angry and overlook [the fault of others] despite having authority, [in this way] the outcome will be in your favour.

572. INGRATITUDE

1. Doing good to an ingrate is from the greatest of crimes.
2. Being ungrateful for a blessing causes it to be taken away and being thankful for it causes it to last.
3. Ingratitude for blessings makes one stumble and strips away the blessings.
4. Ungratefulness for a blessing is vileness, and accompanying a fool is [a cause of] misfortune.
5. Being ungrateful for a blessing is the cause of its removal.
6. The one who is unthankful for blessings is ungrateful for the bounty of Allah.
7. Ingratitude for blessings is the thing that brings [divine] retribution.
8. The one who is ungrateful for blessings is dispraised in the sight of the Creator and the creation.
9. Ingratitude for blessings is not a success [rather it is a failure].
10. There is no blessing with ingratitude.
11. Verily ingratitude for blessings is vileness and accompanying the ignorant is [a cause of] misfortune.
12. Blessings are stripped away by ingratitude.
13. The bane of blessings is ingratitude.
14. The cause of alteration [and removal] of blessings is ingratitude.
15. In ungratefulness for blessings is [the cause of] its removal.
16. Whoever is ungrateful for blessings, [divine] retribution comes upon him.

573. THE DISBELIEVER

1. The disbeliever is a vile deceiver, perfidious, deluded by his ignorance and duped.
2. For the disbeliever, this world is his Paradise, the transient is what he strives for, death is [the cause of] his wretchedness and hellfire is his final end.
3. The disbeliever is an immoral, ignorant person.
4. The disbeliever is ill-tempered and has an evil manner.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

5. The disbeliever is a misguiding deceiver, hard-hearted, [and] perfidious.
6. The final end of the disbeliever is hellfire.
7. The disbeliever did not disbelieve until he became ignorant.
8. The concern of the disbeliever is for his [life in this] world, his efforts are for the transient [pleasures] and his goal is [fulfilling] his lust.

574. DISBELIEF

1. Disbelief is disappointment [and failure].
2. Counter disbelief with faith.
3. Disbelief is loss.

Notes

1. Or: Disbelief is abandonment [by Allah].

575. RESTRAINT

1. Restraining yourself from that which others possess is one of the two generosity.
2. Verily restraint during the confusion of misguidance is better than embarking on terrors.
3. There is no piety like self-restraint.

576. SUFFICIENCY

1. Being pleased with what is sufficient is better than striving for lavishness.
2. Being pleased with what suffices leads to virtue.
3. Blessed is the one who adorns himself with virtue and is satisfied with what suffices.
4. One who is content with that which suffices is led by it towards virtue.
5. One who limits himself to what suffices hastens comfort and lives in an abode of ease.
6. No one can dispense with the need to seek his sustenance and that which he requires of provisions.

577. RECOMPENSE

1. Extend your hand in recompense to the one who has done good to you, and if you are unable [to do this] then the very least you should do is thank him.
2. Recompense is liberation.
3. One who endeavours to recompense the good that is done to him has indeed recompensed it.
4. One who does not recompense offence with favour is not from the noble-minded ones.
5. Recompensing the wrongdoer with favour is from the perfection of faith.
6. The most severely punished of all people is one who recompenses good with evil.
7. When your hand is short and unable to recompense [the one who does good to you] then lengthen your speech with gratitude.
8. Return the stone from whence it came to you, for indeed evil is not repulsed except by evil.

Notes

1. This is in situations where forgiveness and patience may bring greater harm.

578. COMPETENCE

1. One whose competence is good is loved by his sovereign.
2. One who is raised [to a high rank] without competence is dropped without wrongdoing.
3. One whose competence is good deserves [to be given] authority.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

579. DUTY

1. One who imposes upon you a duty that you are unable to bear has indeed asked you to disobey him.
2. Affectation is from the morals of the hypocrites.
3. Verily Allah, the Glorified, commanded His servants by choice and forbade them by warning. He made duties easy and did not impose difficult duties. For a little He gave plenty. He is not disobeyed out of defeat nor is He obeyed by force. He did not send prophets for sport, nor did He reveal the Book to the creation for amusement. He did not create the Heavens and the earth in vain: That is a conjecture of the faithless. So woe to the faithless for the Fire.

Notes

1. Q38:27

580. THE SPEAKER

1. For every speaker there are times [and conditions where he is able to speak].
2. You have started flying while still a nestling and growling before coming of age.

581. THE IDEAL ONE

1. The ideal [person] is one whose seriousness prevails over his jesting [and frivolity].

582. PERFECTION

1. Perfection is in three things: Patience in calamities, piety in pursuits and fulfilling the needs of the seeker.
2. Perfection [of what is desired] is non-existent in this world.
3. You will never attain perfection until you rise above imperfection.
4. From the perfection of a human being and the abundance of his merit is his own feeling of imperfection [in himself].

583. PLOTS

1. One who is not cautious of [evil] plots before they occur, does not benefit from regret after their assault.

584. THE SAGACIOUS

1. The foundation of a sagacious person is his intellect, his magnanimity is his character and his religion is his distinction.
2. The sagacious person is one whose today is better than his yesterday and [one who] keeps blame away from himself [by not doing anything blameworthy].
3. The sagacious person is one who enlivens his virtues and kills off his vices by subduing his lust and his vain desires.
4. The sagacious person is one who is inattentive towards others while expecting much from [and constantly judging] himself.
5. The sagacious person is one who controls the reins of his lustful desires.
6. The sagacious person is one who dons the garment of modesty and the armour of forbearance.
7. The most sagacious person of all is one who loathes this world, cuts off his hope and aspiration from it, and turns his desire and expectation away from it.
8. Verily the sagacious people are those who have loathing for this world and lower their eyes from its splendour; they turn their hearts away from it and yearn passionately for the everlasting abode.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

9. Verily the sagacious person is one who restrains his lustful desire and subdues his outburst in times of anger by quelling it.
10. The sagacious person's friend is truth and his enemy is falsehood.
11. Only he is sagacious who seeks forgiveness when he does wrong and regrets when he commits a sin.
12. For the sagacious person there is admonition in everything.
13. Sagacity is [in] fearing Allah, the Glorified, eschewing the forbidden and improving one's Hereafter [through good deeds].
14. The most sagacious among you is the most pious among you.
15. The greatest sagacity is God-wariness.
16. The determination and effort of the sagacious one is for the improvement of his Hereafter and for acquiring more provisions [for it].
17. The sagacious person is one who shortens his hopes.
18. The sagacious person is one who knows himself and is sincere in his actions.
19. It is a sufficient sagacity for a person to recognize his own flaws.
20. It is a sufficient sagacity for a person to remain moderate in his goals and reasonable in his quests.
21. It is a sufficient sagacity for a person to overcome his vain desire and possess intelligence.
22. It is a sufficient sagacity for a person to discover his own flaws [instead of dwelling on the flaws of others] and be moderate in what he seeks.

585. THERE IS NO GOD BUT ALLAH

1. 'There is no God but Allah' is the declaration of faith, the first step towards good deeds and acquiring the pleasure of the Most Merciful, and a means of repelling Satan.

586. VILENESS

1. Vileness is preferring the love of wealth over the delight of praise and commendation.
2. Vileness is the opposite of all the virtues and the combination of all the vices, evils and lowly traits.
3. The greatest vileness is praising the blameworthy.
4. Vileness is the foundation of evil.
5. Vileness is the accumulator of dispraise.
6. Vileness necessitates deceit.
7. Vileness is preferring wealth over people.
8. Vileness is ugly so do not make it your attire.
9. Hastening punishment is one of the signs of vileness.
10. Betraying [one's] agreements is one of the signs of vileness.
11. Being a bad neighbour is from the signs of vileness.
12. Slandering the righteous is one of the ugliest vile traits.
13. It is from vileness for a person to preserve his wealth and sacrifice his dignity [instead].
14. It is from the greatest vileness for a man to protect himself while surrendering his wife.
15. Being ill-natured is from vileness.

587. THE VILE

1. When the vile one attains a position above his status, his condition changes [for the worse].
2. The vile one is harsh when he is approached entreatingly and becomes soft when he is berated.
3. The vile person does not follow anyone except the one who is like him and he does not incline towards anyone but the one who is similar to him.
4. No good is expected from a vile person, and no one is safe from his evil and secure from his ills.
5. The vile one dons the attire of dishonour and harms the freemen.
6. The vile one considers his favours as debts that he will demand repayment for [in the future].

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. The vile one is such that when he needs you he puts you in difficulty, and when you need him he torments you.
8. Be cautious of the vile one when you honour him, and the depraved one when you bring him forward, and the lowly one when you raise him.
9. The vile one spares no effort in seeking evil vengeance for the wrong that has been done to him.
10. Beware of depending on the vile one, for indeed he forsakes the one who depends on him.
11. The most difficult objective is seeking that which is in the possession of the vile ones.
12. The vile ones are the most patient physically [but are weakest in spirit].
13. The vile one has no magnanimity.
14. The vile person is never ashamed.
15. The vile person is one who puts a lot of obligation [on others when he does any good to them].
16. The vile one is such that when he has the power, he commits atrocities and when he makes a promise, he breaks it.
17. The vile one is such that when he gives, he does begrudgingly and when he is given something, he is ungrateful.
18. When you come upon vile [and miserly] people then give the excuse of fasting [so that you may leave them without partaking of a meal].
19. When the vile one attains a position above his status, his condition changes [for the worse].
20. When the vile one increases his reverence for you then increase your scorn for him.
21. The authority of a vile person manifests his evil traits and flaws.
22. The dominion of the vile is the humiliation of the honourable.
23. The ascendancy the vile ones is from the calamities of the times.
24. The one who seeks good from vile people is deprived of it.
25. The triumph of a vile person leads to destruction.
26. The triumph of vile people leads to haughtiness and defiance.
27. The shadow [and patronage] of the vile ones is [an] endemic adversity.
28. The habit of vile people is to repay good with evil.
29. The habit of vile people is denial [the blessings they have been given].
30. The habit of vile people is ugly slander [and backbiting].
31. Harming honourable and liberated people is the habit of the vile and ignorant ones.
32. The honour of a vile person is humiliation and the deviation of the intellect is the worst deviation.
33. Flee as far as you can from the foolish, vile one.
34. The poverty of the honourable one is better than the wealth of the vile one.
35. Absence of vile people is a [source of] comfort for the people.
36. Every time the rank of a vile person is raised, the people around him diminish, whereas the honourable one is the opposite of this.
37. One who is vile, [the occasion of] his birth is evil.
38. One who needs something from the vile ones has indeed been forsaken.
39. Hard-heartedness is from the traits of the vile ones.
40. The one who accompanies vileness is censured.
41. The withholding of the honourable one is better than the granting of the vile one.
42. The vile one is recognized by [his] evil action, ugly character and blameworthy miserliness.
43. The practice of the vile ones is denial.

588. CONFUSION

1. There is nothing after clarification but confusion.

589. MILK

1. Milk is one of the two meats.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

590. THE STUBBORN

1. The stubborn one has no [valid] opinion.
2. The stubborn one has no planning.
3. Never argue with a stubborn person in a gathering.
4. A stubborn person has no [valid] opinion.

591. STUBBORNESS

1. Stubbornness causes its rider to stumble.
2. Stubbornness gives rise to hostilities and kindles rancour in the hearts.
3. Stubbornness is the most harmful of all things in this life and the next.
4. Beware of blameworthy stubbornness, for indeed it provokes hostilities.
5. Stubbornness is ill-fated.
6. Stubbornness is the seed of evil.
7. Stubbornness tarnishes the soul.
8. Stubbornness is the provoker of hostilities.
9. Stubbornness causes its rider to fall off.
10. Stubbornness is the symbol of destruction [and ruin].
11. Stubbornness is followed by detriment.
12. Stubbornness corrupts opinion.
13. Stubbornness brings to a person that which he is not in need of.
14. The fruit of stubbornness is ruin.
15. The rider of stubbornness is exposed to affliction.
16. Stubbornness is the cause of turmoil [and war].
17. Stubbornness may bring about that which a person is not in need of.
18. There is no mount more insubordinate than stubbornness.

592. IMPORTUNITY

1. Importunity is an inviter of deprivation.
2. Importunity is enough as a [reason for] deprivation.
3. Excessive importunity leads to refusal.
4. The excessive importunity of a man leads to his deprivation.
5. One whose importunity increases gets deprived.
6. One who is importunate in asking irritates [people].
7. One who is importunate in asking gets deprived.
8. One who is importunate in his asking invites his own deprivation.

593. IMPORTANT EVENTS

1. One who understands the times [in which he lives] does not neglect to prepare [for what is to come].
2. One who is crippled by the hardship of the times is raised by the assistance of the noble-minded ones.
3. How quick the hours pass in the day and how fast the days pass in the month and how quick the months pass in the year and how fast the years pass in the lifetime!
4. Days are the pages of your lifetime so eternize [or bind] them with your best deeds.
5. Hours are the lurking place of banes.
6. Hours plunder lifetimes.
7. The passing of days brings the benefit of experiences.
8. Hours diminish lifetimes.
9. The passing of days reveals the hidden secrets.
10. Verily you are only [the sum total of] a fixed number of days, and every day that passes you by takes a piece of you with it, so reduce your desires and be moderate in your earning.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

11. Verily the previous generations were only wiped out by the alternation of movements and stillness.
12. The early morning hours of Saturdays and Thursdays are a blessing.
13. The era of the just [ruler] is the best of eras.
14. Verily your moments are portions of your life, so do not pass your time except in that which will save you [in the Hereafter].
15. In every instance there is an action [that should be performed].
16. There will come a time upon the people when nothing of the Qur'an will remain except its written text, and nothing of Islam [will remain] but its name; on that day their masjids will be marvellously constructed buildings, but will be empty of (or desolate with regards to) guidance.
16. A time will come upon the people when none will be given a high position except the slanderer, none will be deemed witty except the corrupt and none will be regarded as weak but the just. People will consider charity as a loss, keeping ties with near relatives as an obligation and worship as a means of gaining superiority over people. Vain desires will overcome them and guidance will disappear from among them.
17. The camel growls after its silence, and time pounces [attacking] like a rapacious beast of prey.
18. By the One who split the seed and created humankind, there will surely come forth amongst you a community that will strike the heads on the interpretation of the Qur'an just as Muhammad (s) began [conveying to you] its revelation, this is the decree from the Most Merciful upon you in the end of days.
19. Do not plunge into the surge (or fire) of sedition that comes your way, and move away from its path while opening up the middle of the road for it [to pass].
20. He will direct desires towards guidance when [people] will have turned guidance towards desires, and he will turn his opinion towards the Qur'an when they turn the Qur'an towards their opinions.
21. You have forgotten what you were reminded of and felt safe from that which you were warned about, so your opinion has gone astray and your affair has dispersed.
22. Do you see (or observe) anyone other than a poor man suffering poverty, or a rich man who shows ingratitude in return for the blessings that Allah has bestowed on him, or a miser who denies the right of Allah in order to increase his wealth, or an unruly person who closes his ears [as if he is deaf] to all [wise] counsel.
23. By the One who sent Muhammad (s) with the Truth, you will verily be mixed [and shaken] a complete mixing, and sifted a total sieving and fully mixed as by a ladle in a cooking pot, until those who are low from among you become high and the high ones become low, and those who have fallen behind will come forward and those who are in front will fall behind.
24. The masses are not reformed except by justice.
25. It was said to him ('a): Verily nothing can reform the people of Kufa except the sword. To this he ('a) replied: If nothing but my destruction reforms them then may Allah not reform them!
26. The bane of the masses is disobedience [to the rightful ruler].
27. How many an owner of great wealth has been turned into a lowly pauper by [the passage of] time.
28. How will you remain in your current state when time is [in the process of] transforming you?!
29. One who blames [the vicissitudes of] time, his blame will be lengthy.
30. People do not say about anything, "[what a great] blessing!" except that time has hidden a bad day for it.
31. Verily you are [living] in an age when those who speak about the truth are few, and tongues are weary of uttering the truth, and those who stick to the truth are humiliated. The people of this time are engaged in disobedience and make peace with each other upon treachery [and deceit]. Their youths are violent [and wicked] while their elders are sinful. Their scholars are hypocrites and their speakers are deviants. Their young do not respect the elderly and their rich do not support the poor.
32. Verily you will be faced with my vilification and repudiation, so revile me [if you must], but beware of repudiating me.
33. We have come upon an age of intransigence and an era of ingratitude. In it the good-doer is counted as an evil-doer and the unjust increases in his insolence.
34. The people may become brothers in wickedness and desert one another in religion, and [they may] love each other over falsehood and hate each other over the truth.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

35. So fear Allah with the fearing of one whose body has become fatigued by fright, and who has been kept awake from his little sleep by his night worship, and who has been made thirsty in the heat of his days by hope [of attaining nearness to Allah].
36. How amazing it is; and why would I not be amazed by the mistake of this community (or these groups) with their different arguments with regards to their religion. They neither follow the footsteps of the Prophet nor do they emulate the actions of the vicegerent. They do not believe in the unseen and do not restrain themselves from [sins and] shortcomings. They act on uncertainties and tread in [the way of] their passions. For them good is whatever they [like and] consider good and evil is whatever they [dislike and] consider evil. Their reliance for resolving problems is on themselves and their confidence in regard to dubious matters is on their own opinions, as if each one of them is his own leader, even though he has formed his opinion without turning to reliable sources and strong proofs.
37. Indeed, you have again reverted to the position of the Bedouin Arabs after migration [to Islam] and have become [divided into] different parties after once being closely united.
38. Indeed those who [would] remember and remind [the people about Allah] have left you and only those who forget [Allah and the Day of Resurrection] and cause others to forget have remained behind.
39. Indeed the reins of destruction are dragging you and locks of darkness [and malice] lay fixed on your hearts.
40. Indeed you have become devoted to one another in the love of this transient world and the rejection of the Hereafter.
41. Indeed the religion of one among you has become like the licking of his tongue, [or like] the hobby that is pursued by one who is free from his work and has gained the approval of his master.
42. They have plunged into the seas of temptations and have taken to innovation rather than following the practices of the Prophet, and they have gone deep into ignorance while abandoning knowledge.
43. Do not lose hope in time when it withholds, and do not rely upon it when it gives, and always be extremely cautious of it.
44. Verily time will pass for those who remain [in this world] just as it passed for those gone by. That which has gone shall not return and that which is in it will not remain forever. Its later deeds are the same as the former ones. Its affairs try to excel each another and its banners follow each other. Its companion is never separated
45. Verily time has its bow stretched [and ready], and its arrow does not miss, and its wound does not heal. It afflicts the healthy with sickness and the [one who is] safe with destruction.
46. Time is responsible for the separation of loved ones.
47. An hour of humiliation is not compensated for by a lifetime of honour.
48. Be flexible with time when it submits itself to you and do not put anything in danger out of hope for gaining more [than it].
49. Time has indeed made its gratitude incumbent on the one who attains what he seeks.
50. Time wears out the bodies, renews hopes, brings death closer and takes aspirations further away.
51. Time consists of two days: a day for you and a day against you, so when it is for you then do not become vain and ungrateful, and when it is against you then have patience.
52. Time has two states: destruction and bestowal; that which it destroys does not return and that which it bestows does not last.
53. Verily time is an enemy who is not shown enmity, a [chosen] judge who is not unjust and a fighter who has not [and cannot be] fought.
54. One who resists time is compelled by it and one who submits to it is not safe [from it].
55. The age of the tyrant [ruler] is the worst of ages.
56. Every day is driving towards its morrow.
57. Calamities are born from the passage of time.
58. There is no guarantee on time.
59. One is neither safe from the passage of time nor secure from the calamities of the days.
60. It behoves the one who knows about time not to feel secure from its adversities and vicissitudes.
61. Obedience is the shield of the masses and justice is the shield of the [rulers of] nations.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

62. So the hearts are heedless of right guidance, too hard to accept their [good] fortune, traversing on the wrong paths as though the one being addressed is someone else, and as though the fortune lies in amassing worldly gains.
63. How effective these admonitions [would be] if only they were received by pure hearts, attentive ears and unwavering minds.
64. From them mischief will spring up and all wrong will turn towards them. They will fling anyone who isolates himself from it (i.e. the mischief) back into it and they will drive anyone who stays back from it towards it.
65. If falsehood dominates, it has [always] been so in the past, and if truth diminishes, that too has often occurred and may [again] happen. It is seldom that a thing lags behind and remains behind.
66. Indeed the evil people have emerged and the righteous people have hidden; and falsehood has become abundant while truth has diminished.
67. Time has indeed come full circle to its [initial] state, as it was when the heavens and earth were first created.
68. The abominable has become so rampant that the shame one feels from it has reduced.
69. Dishonesty has increased so much that there are only few who can [now] be trusted.
70. Why is it that I see you as bodies without souls, and souls without prosperity, and devotees without righteousness, and traders without profits?!
71. Time betrays its companion and does not please the one who blames it.
72. When the epoch becomes corrupt, the wicked gain mastery [over the people].
73. In time there are vicissitudes (or lessons [to be learnt]).
74. One who busies himself with [the worldly activities of his] lifetime becomes occupied by it [and pays no heed to the Hereafter].
75. Whoever feels safe from time is betrayed by it and whoever regards it as great is humiliated by it.

594. INSULTS

1. Whoever insults [and disputes with] the people, his enemies increase.

595. PLEASURE AND DELIGHT

1. Pleasure distracts.
2. Pleasures are corrupters.
3. Pleasures are woes.
4. The root of [all] woes is being distracted by [worldly] pleasures.
5. Many a pleasure has death [hidden] in it.
6. Few are those who are enticed by pleasures but that their destruction is caused by it.
7. How many a vile pleasure has prevented one from [attaining] lofty stations.
8. Nobody delights in any of the pleasures of this world but that it will be a distress for him on the Day of Resurrection.
9. There is no good in a pleasure that does not last.
10. There is no pleasure in transient desires.
11. The pleasure of disobedience is not worth the chastisement of hellfire.
12. The sweetness of [worldly] pleasure does not compensate for the bitterness of adversities.
13. The pleasure of disobedience does not equate to the disgrace in the Hereafter and its painful chastisements.
14. There is no good in the pleasure that brings about regret and the desire that is followed by pain.
15. With every pleasure remember its [eventual] end, and with every blessing [recall] its removal, and with every hardship its [ultimate] relief; for indeed this makes the blessings last longer, subdues lustful desires more, takes vanity further away, brings relief closer, and is more conducive for the relieving of distress and attainment of aspirations.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

596. THE TONGUE

1. The tongue is a gauge that is given weight by the intellect and made light by ignorance.
2. Safeguard your tongue just as you treasure your gold and your money.
3. Protect your head from the slips of your tongue, and constrain it with reason, judiciousness, God-wariness and intellect.
4. Restrain your tongue before it prolongs your incarceration and destroys your soul, for there is nothing more worthy of long imprisonment than a tongue that has strayed from the right and is hasty in responding.
5. Be cautious of the tongue for indeed it is an arrow that can miss its mark.
6. Beware of making your tongue a medium for slandering your brothers, or of saying that which will become proof against you and a reason for harming you.
7. Know that the tongue is a part of a person's body, so when he desists, speech will not assist him and when he opens up [and is ready to speak], speech will not give him time to pause.
8. Now surely the good repute of a man that is preserved for him by Allah among the people is better than the wealth that is inherited by those who do not praise him.
9. Verily your tongue demands from you that which you have made it accustomed to.
10. The tongue is the interpreter of the heart.
11. The tongue is recalcitrant to its owner.
12. The tongue is the interpreter of the intellect.
13. A person is hidden under his tongue.
14. The tongue is a beast of prey, if you let it free it will injure [you].
15. The tongue is the gauge of a human being.
16. The tongues reveal that which is concealed by the inner consciences.
17. The affliction of a human being is in his tongue.
18. The edge of a spearhead severs the appendages [of the body] whereas the edge of the tongue cuts short lifetimes.
19. The edge of the tongue is sharper than the edge of a spearhead.
20. Many a tongue destroys a person.
21. The slip of the tongue is more harmful than the thrust of the spearhead.
22. The slip of the tongue is more severe than the injury caused by a spearhead.
23. The slip of the tongue causes the greatest destruction.
24. Restraining the tongue is [a means of attaining] fortune and authority while setting it free is [a cause of] destruction.
25. The piercing of the tongue is more injurious than the piercing of the spear.
26. Accustom your tongue to polite speech and you will remain safe from reproach.
27. It is very rare for the tongue to remain fair in spreading [news about] the ugly and the good acts [of others].
28. Set your tongue aright and you will be secure.
29. Every person is held accountable for the offence committed by his tongue and his hand.
30. How much blood has been spilt by the mouth!
31. How many a person has been destroyed by the tongue!
32. The tongue of the intelligent person is behind his heart.
33. The tongue of the ignorant person is the key to his destruction.
34. Your tongue demands from you that which you have made it accustomed to.
35. He ('a) said about the one whom he reproached: His tongue is like honey but his heart is a prison for rancour.
36. The tongue of a virtuous person is enthralled by the continued remembrance of Allah.
37. If you restrain your tongue, it will save you and if you set it free, it will ruin you.
38. Your tongue demands from you that which you have accustomed it to and your soul requires from you that which you have familiarized it with.
39. One whose tongue is sweet [and polite], his friends increase.
40. One who protects his tongue honours himself.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

41. One who does not control his tongue regrets.
42. One who imprisons his tongue remains safe from regret.
43. One who sets his tongue aright adorns his intellect.
44. One who makes his tongue his master has decreed his own death.
45. One who restrains his tongue is safe from regret.
46. One who sets his tongue free demonstrates his own foolishness.
47. Guarding the tongue is part of faith.
48. One who does not guard his tongue has not completed his faith.
49. Without a tongue, the human being would be nothing more than lifeless statue or a wild beast.
50. Nothing attracts the heart of a human being more than a [sweet and eloquent] tongue, and none beguiles the soul more than Satan.
51. Do not move your tongue except to say that which will earn you reward and that which behoves you to speak [of] openly.
52. Never use the sharpness of your tongue against the one who has made you speak or the eloquence of your speech against the one who guides you [to the right path].
53. The slips of the tongue cannot be controlled.
54. Nothing is more beneficial for a human being than guarding the tongue and doing good to others.
55. This tongue is recalcitrant to its owner.

Notes

1. i.e. as long as he doesn't speak, his intellect and personality remain hidden from others.
2. i.e. because of what one speaks.
3. i.e. the intelligent person ponders before speaking.

597. COURTEOUSNESS

1. When you are the cause of someone's affliction, it is obligatory upon you to show courtesy [and kindness] in trying to remedy his affliction.

598. VAIN TALK

1. Many a vain talk results in evil [action].

599. MEETING

1. Good meetings strengthen the bond of brotherhood.
2. Good encounters (or meetings) are one of the two successes.

600. MEETING ALLAH

1. One who loves to meet Allah, the Glorified, forgets this world.

601. HINTING

1. One who settles for hinting [and indirect reference] becomes needless of declaration.

602. REPROACH, REPRIMAND AND CENSURE

1. Excessiveness in reproach ignites the fire of obstinacy.
2. The easiest thing is censuring the ignorant ones.
3. When you [have to] censure [someone], make it short.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. Many a person who is reproached has done nothing wrong.
5. When slips and errors increase, reproach increases.
6. Blame may at times be beneficial.
7. Reproof is one of the two punishments.
8. Repetition of [the] reprimand is more severe than the pain of a beating.
9. Too much reproof instils hatred in the hearts and alienates the companions.
10. One whose reproach increases, his disgrace increases.
11. The blamer should not blame anyone but himself.

Notes

1. Or: The thing of least importance is the censure of the ignorant ones.

603. AMUSEMENT

1. Amusement corrupts serious resolutions.
2. Keep away from amusements for indeed you have not been created aimlessly so that you may be amused, and you have not been left without purpose so that you may indulge in vanities.
3. The furthest of all people from righteousness is one who is [excessively] fond of amusement.
4. The beginning of amusement is play and its end is war.
5. The furthest of all people from prosperity is one who is fond of amusement and jest.
6. Amusement is from the fruits of ignorance.
7. Amusement is the provision of foolishness.
8. Many an amusement alienates a freeman.
9. The worst thing that one's lifetime can be wasted on is idle sport.
10. One whose amusement increases is considered a fool.
11. One whose amusement increases, his intelligence decreases.
12. Whoever is overpowered by amusement, his seriousness is nullified.
13. Gatherings of amusement corrupt the faith.
14. Intellect [and wisdom] and idle play do not go together.
15. One who takes pleasure in idle sport and is fond of amusement and entertainment does not become successful.

604. NIGHT AND DAY

1. The night and day are pursuing their courses in covering those who remain and wiping out the traces of those who have passed away.
2. Verily your night and day are not enough to meet all your needs, so divide them between your work and your relaxation.
3. Verily the night and day are working in you [by making you older] so work in them, and they are taking from you so take from them.
4. The succession of the night and day is the hiding place of calamities and the herald of separation [from loved ones].
5. The succession of days are [like] dreams, their pleasures are [causes of] agonies and their gifts are [fraught with] evanescence and maladies.
6. One whose nights and days pass him by is made old by them.
7. One whose nights and days pass him by is chastised and afflicted, and brought closer to his death by them.
8. Verily one whose riding mount is the night and day is carried [forward] by it even when he is stationary, and he traverses the distance even if he is settled in one place.

605. GENTLENESS AND SOFTNESS

1. Through gentleness, the souls feel at ease.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Be soft without being weak and stern without using force.
3. One whose nature is gentle, loving him is unavoidable.
4. One whose wood is soft, his branches become thick.
5. One who has a gentle demeanour makes his community's love [for him] last.
6. One who is not lenient with the one who is under him will not obtain what he requires.
7. Make your demeanour gentle and humble yourself in front of Allah, He will elevate you.
8. Make your demeanour gentle for indeed whoever has a gentle demeanour, his community's love [for him] will last.

Notes

1. Meaning that one who is gentle has many friends.

606. DISTINCTION

1. Verily distinction is nothing but your giving that which you owe [of the rights of others] and forgiving the offences [of others].
2. He who has been forgone by praise does not attain distinction.
3. He who has been forgone by praise will not acquire distinction.
4. One who lacks diligence does not attain distinction.

607. TRIBULATIONS

1. Verily tribulations have certain extents that have to be passed so remain in slumber until they pass, for indeed trying to find a solution before this only increases [and prolongs] it.
2. Verily tribulations have certain extents, and the extents have limits, so remain patient until you reach their limits, for trying to find a solution for them before they have passed only increases [and prolongs] them.
3. Tribulation is linked with love of this world.
4. Tribulation has been linked to love of this world.

608. PRAISE AND EXTOLMENT

1. Be on your guard against excessive flattery and praise for indeed these two have a foul odour in the heart.
2. Beware of praising anyone for something that is not in him, for indeed his action affirms his attribute and belies you.
3. The ugliest truth is a person's praise for himself.
4. Verily the person who praises you is surely a deceiver of your intellect, [and] a cheater who cheats you about yourself with false compliments and spurious praise; so if you deprive him of your grant or withhold from him your favour, he will label you with every scandal and will attribute every ugly act to you.
5. Commendation causes vainglory and brings one closer to heedlessness.
6. When you praise, be brief.
7. When one of the pious believers is extolled [for his virtues], he fears what is said about him, so he says: I know myself better than others, and my Lord knows me better than myself. O Allah! Do not hold me accountable for what they say and make me better than what they think of me.
8. Recommendation of the evil ones is one of the greatest sins.
9. Love for compliments and praise is from the surest opportunities of Satan.
10. The best praise is that which flows from the tongues of the righteous.
11. The worst praise is that which flows from the tongues of the wicked.
12. Seeking praise without deserving it is foolishness.
13. How many a person is thrilled by the praise showered upon him.
14. Excessive praise is flattery; it causes vainglory and brings one closer to heedlessness.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

15. Every praiser has the right to a good reward or a handsome gift from whom he praises.
16. One who praises you has [actually] slaughtered you.
17. One who praises you for what is not in you is indeed likely to blame you for that which you have not done.
18. One who is praised for that which is not in him is ridiculed by it.
19. Whoever praises you for that which is not in you, then it is actually a criticism of you if you think about it.
20. One of the ugliest blameworthy acts [of a person] is praising the wicked.
21. The one who praises a person for that which is not in him is mocking him.
22. The one who praises you for that which is not in you is [actually] mocking you, and if you do not give him that which fulfils his wants, he will be excessive in his blame and defamation of you.

609. THE HUMAN BEING

1. A person is in the position where he places his soul through his devotion and obedience, so if he purifies it, it becomes pure and if he sullies it, it becomes sullied.
2. A person is in the position that he chooses for his soul. If he preserves it, it becomes elevated and if he does not preserve it, it becomes abased.
3. A person is [gauged] by his two small parts: his heart and his tongue. If he battles, he fights with his heart and if he speaks, he speaks by his articulation.
4. The human being changes in three instances: when he is close to kings, when he gains positions of authority and when he becomes wealthy. So whoever does not change in these conditions, then he is one who possesses a strong intellect and an upright character.
5. A man is [to be gauged] by his astuteness not by his appearance.
6. A person is [valued] by his endeavour [and effort], not by his [material] acquisition.
7. A man is [gauged] by his endeavour.
8. A person is [judged] by [what is in] his heart.
9. A person is [gauged] by his faith.
10. The distinction of a man is [by] his wealth but his honour is [by] his religion.
11. The distinction of a man is his intellect and his magnanimity is [by] his [good] character.
12. The distinction of a person is [by] his knowledge and his beauty is his intellect.
13. The evidence of a person's roots is his action.
14. The value of every person [gauged by] is what he knows.
15. The value of every person is his intellect.
16. A person's worth is based on the extent of his merit.
17. The worth of every person is [measured by] that which he does well.
18. Every person has a need (or for every affair there is [a proper] etiquette).
19. The good and evil of every person, and the purity or impurity of his origin is evinced by what he manifests of his actions.
20. When the virtues of a man are more than his vices, then that [person] is ideal, and when his virtues and vices are equal then he has protected himself [from destruction], but if his vices are more than his virtues then he is doomed.
21. The evil man does not think positively about anyone because he does not see anyone but through the depiction of his own soul.
22. The worst person is he who sells his religion for the worldly life of others.
23. At times people are deceived.
24. A person is weighed by his speech and valued by his action, so say that which is weighty and do that which has great value.
25. A person's value is indicated by his knowledge and intellect.
26. Every person is answerable for what is in his possession and his family.

610. MAGNANIMITY

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Magnanimity is a person's eschewal of that which dishonours him and his earning that which embellishes him.
2. Magnanimity is [displaying] equity when in authority, showing forgiveness despite having the power [to take revenge] and being financially supportive [to those in need] in one's society (or in times of hardship).
3. Magnanimity is spreading goodness and being hospitable to guests.
4. Magnanimity is a title that encompasses all the [other] merits and virtues.
5. The most honourable magnanimity is loyal brotherhood.
6. The best magnanimity is preserving goodwill [and affection].
7. The root of magnanimity is modesty and its fruit is chastity.
8. The most honourable magnanimity is controlling one's anger and killing one's lustful desires.
9. The most excellent magnanimity is tolerating the offenses of one's brothers.
10. The most excellent magnanimity is for a man to preserve his dignity.
11. The beginning of magnanimity is obedience to Allah and its end is keeping away from vile traits.
12. The beginning of magnanimity is [having] a cheerful mien and its end is being affectionate towards the people.
13. The beginning of magnanimity is cheerfulness and its end is persistence in righteousness.
14. The most excellent magnanimity is modesty, and its fruit is chastity.
15. The most excellent magnanimity is financially supporting your brothers with [your] wealth, and treating them as your equals in status.
16. Magnanimity is fulfilling one's promise.
17. Magnanimity is eschewing vile traits.
18. Concealing [one's] poverty and sickness is part of magnanimity.
19. Magnanimity is bereft and devoid of every [form of] vulgarity.
20. Magnanimity impels [one] towards noble traits.
21. There is no magnanimity like remaining free from sins.
22. Magnanimity is contentment and tolerance (or patience).
23. Magnanimity prevents every vileness.
24. Magnanimity is being free from every [form of] wickedness.
25. Magnanimity is being free from vulgarity and disloyalty.
26. There is magnanimity in three things: lowering one's gaze, lowering one's voice and walking with modesty.
27. Three things are the consolidators of magnanimity: Giving without being asked, being faithful without having made a promise and being generous despite having less.
28. Three things amount to magnanimity: generosity despite poverty [and hardship], tolerance of everything other than humiliation and refraining from asking others.
29. The completeness of magnanimity is for you not to do in private what you would feel ashamed of doing in front of others.
30. Two qualities have in them the consolidation of magnanimity: a person's eschewing that which disgraces him and his acquiring that which embellishes him.
31. One's magnanimity is to the extent of the nobility of his soul.
32. He who is not careful of his obligation towards his friends and does not treat his enemies justly cannot be attributed with magnanimity.
33. If magnanimity was not difficult to acquire and heavy to bear, the wicked and ignorant ones would not have left from it anything even for a single night, but its acquisition is difficult and its burden is heavy, so the wicked and ignorant turned away from it and the honourable and virtuous ones adopted it.
34. Part of magnanimity is going beyond one's [normal] capacity in working for [the pleasure of] Allah.
35. Lowering the gaze and walking with modesty are part of magnanimity.
36. Obedience to Allah and good estimation are part of magnanimity.
37. Keeping away from the forbidden is one of the conditions of magnanimity.
38. From the completeness of magnanimity is for one to feel ashamed of himself.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

39. Magnanimity is one of the most excellent religious teachings and there is no good in a religion which has no magnanimity in it.
40. Staying clear of vile traits is from the completeness of magnanimity.
41. Keeping ties with near relatives is from the most excellent magnanimity.
42. Maintaining resoluteness [and judiciousness] is from the most excellent magnanimity.
43. It is from the completeness of magnanimity for you to forget your right upon others while recalling their right upon you.
44. It is from magnanimity for you to go out of your way when you are asked [for something] and to lighten [your requests] when you ask [someone for anything].
45. It is part of magnanimity for you to be moderate and not extravagant, and to keep the promises you make.
46. Bearing the offences of one's brothers is from magnanimity.
47. Nobody has carried a burden heavier than magnanimity.
48. With affluence, magnanimity becomes manifested.
49. The magnanimity of a person is to the extent of his intellect.
50. The magnanimity of a person is [gauged by] the truthfulness of his speech.
51. A person's magnanimity is in his tolerance of his brothers' mistakes.
52. The basis of magnanimity is truthful speech and doing good to others.
53. The establishment of magnanimity is in struggling with your brother to make him obey Allah, the Glorified, and restraining him from disobeying Him, and increasing your censure [of him] for it.
54. Magnanimity is not perfected except for the intelligent one.
55. There is no magnanimity like keeping clear of sins.
56. There is no magnanimity in one who has no determination.
57. Magnanimity is not completed except by bearing the hardships of good acts.
58. Magnanimity is evinced by increased modesty, generous giving and refraining from harming others.
59. The magnanimity of a person is evinced by [his] spreading goodness, granting favours and abandoning [putting others under] obligation.

611. SICKNESS

1. Sickness is [a form of] confinement of the body.
2. There are two things that should not be scorned: sickness and the poor relative.
3. One who hides his sickness from the physicians has betrayed his body.
4. Whoever conceals his hidden ailment, his physician becomes incapable of curing him.
5. Sickness in one of the two confinements.

612. DISPUTATION AND ARGUMENT

1. Disputation is the seed of evil.
2. Argument in religion corrupts certitude.
3. The fruit of disputation is hatred.
4. Too much disputation is the cause of hatred [and enmity].
5. One should not dispute with six types of people: the jurist, the leader, the low, the lewd, the woman and the child.
6. One whose disputation increases does not remain safe from error.
7. Whoever accustoms himself to disputation, it becomes his habit.
8. One who makes disputation his habit will not turn his night into day [and will remain in the darkness of ignorance].
9. One whose false disputations increase, his blindness from the truth persists.
10. One who disputes with a fool has no intelligence.
11. With excessive disputation, there can be no affection.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

613. JOKING

1. Joking is a [cause of] separation that is followed by rancour.
2. Beware of recalling that which was funny in the speech [of others], even if you narrate it from someone else.
3. Excessiveness in joking is foolishness.
4. Abandon [excessive] joking for indeed it is the conception of rancour.
5. In impudence and excessive joking there is foolishness.
6. Too much joking diminishes one's reverence [and dignity].
7. Too much joking takes away prestige and brings about enmity [and rancour].
8. Everything has a seed, and the seed of enmity is joking.
9. One who jokes [excessively] is taken lightly.
10. One whose joking increases is deemed ignorant.
11. One whose joking is excessive is considered a fool.
12. One whose joking increases, his reverence [and dignity] decreases.
13. One whose joking increases, his dignity diminishes.
14. Whoever jokes excessively will never be without one who bears a grudge against him and one who takes him lightly.
15. Any time a person makes a joke, he parts with a portion of his intellect.
16. Do not make fun of a noble person such that he ends up bearing a grudge against you.
17. Never make fun of a friend thereby turning him into an enemy, or of an enemy thereby making him [want to] destroy you.

614. WALKING

1. Keep walking in your customary way (or with your ailment) as long as you can.

Notes

1. This is how it appears in Nahj al-Balāgha.

615. DELAY

1. Delay and obligation are the spoilers of [the] favour [one does to others].
2. Delay [in giving] is one of the two refusals.
3. Delay [and procrastination] is a chastisement of the soul.

616. SCHEMING

1. Scheming and malice are things that keep faith away.
2. Beware of scheming, for indeed scheming [and plotting] is a blameworthy quality.
3. Scheming is wickedness, deception is evil.
4. Scheming is the practice of the mutinous.
5. Scheming is the trait of the wicked.
6. Scheming against one who trusts in you is ingratitude [and betrayal].
7. The bane of cleverness is scheming.
8. The cornerstone of wisdom is eschewing deceptions.
9. Many a plotter has been struck down by his own stratagem.

617. THE DEVISING OF ALLAH

1. One who feels secure from the devising of Allah is destroyed.
2. One who feels secure from the devising [of Allah] meets with harm.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

618. THE SCHEMER AND PLOTTER

1. The one who always hatches plots [against others] is a devil.
2. The one who is always scheming [against others] is a devil in the form of a human being.
3. One who schemes is afflicted by his own scheming.
4. Whoever schemes against people, Allah, the Glorified, turns his scheme back on him.
5. There is no trustworthiness in the schemer.
6. Evil scheming does not beset anyone but those who practice it.

619. FLATTERY

1. Beware of flattery, for indeed flattery is not from the characteristics of faith [and the faithful].
2. Flattery is not part of the character of Prophets.
3. One whose flattery increases, his [sincere] joyfulness is not recognized.
4. Verily only the one who does not flatter you [truly] adores you, and [only] one who does not make you hear his praise for you [truly] praises you.

620. KINGS AND RULERS

1. A tyrant ruler and an immoral scholar are the most harmful of all people.
2. Accompany the ruler with caution, the friend with humility and cheerfulness, and the enemy with that which you can [use to] establish your proof over him.
3. Verily the ruler is a trustee of Allah on earth, the establisher of justice in the lands and among the people, and the one who deters people from misdeeds in the land.
4. The tyrant king frightens the innocent.
5. An evil commander commissions the vulgar one [to work for him].
6. The bane of kings is evil intentions.
7. The bane of viziers is wicked inner thoughts.
8. The bane of leaders is weakness in politics.
9. The bane of a kingdom is [having] weak defences.
10. When you become the ruler then be kind [to your subjects].
11. When a king builds his kingdom on the foundations of justice and sustains it on the pillars of reason, Allah helps his friends and forsakes his enemies.
12. When the ruler makes you come closer to him, then increase your exaltation of him.
13. Kings have no affection.
14. Transient and fleeting kingship is wretched and insignificant.
15. Being independent of [and not seeking anything from] kings is the best kingship.
16. Boldness [and defiance] in front of the king is the quickest [means of] destruction.
17. The adornment of kingship is justice.
18. The wrath of kings is the messenger of death.
19. The merit of a king is in building prosperous cities.
20. It is seldom that the affection of kings and traitors lasts.
21. The friendship of kings seldom lasts.
22. The hearts of the people are the treasuries of their leader, so whatever he deposits in them, be it justice or oppression, he will find it there.
23. There is no reward with Allah, the Glorified, greater than the reward of a just ruler and a benevolent man.
24. One who gains authority [usually] adopts partiality.
25. One who becomes haughty in his kingship has belittled it.
26. One whose aggression is prolonged, his rule [soon] comes to an end.
27. One whose kingship is tyrannical, his destruction becomes great.
28. Whoever is betrayed by his vizier, his administration gets corrupted.
29. One who fears your whip wishes for your death.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

30. One who relies upon your goodness is concerned about [the end of] your rule.
31. One who boldly [and defiantly] faces the ruler becomes vulnerable to disgrace.
32. Whoever betrays his king, his security is nullified.
33. One who is just in his kingship becomes needless of his aides.
34. One who is concerned about his kingship curtails his aggression.
35. Whoever treats the people unjustly, Allah causes his reign to end and hastens his ruin and destruction.
36. One who is tyrannical in his kingdom, the people wish for his annihilation.
37. One who unsheathes the sword of aggression is stripped of the grandeur of kingship.
38. One who seeks the favour of a king without [the proper] etiquette moves out from safety into harm.
39. Whoever is tyrannical in his reign and increases his aggression, Allah will demolish his foundation and tear down his pillars [of kingship].
40. Whoever is just in his rule and shows kindness [to the people], Allah will elevate his stature and will strengthen [and grant victory to] his helpers.
41. One who makes his kingship subservient to his religion, every king will submit to him.
42. When one makes his religion subservient to his kingship, every person will covet it.
43. One who is occupied with [serving] the king will not [have time to] attend to his brothers.
44. It is a right upon the king to govern himself before his soldiers.
45. Disputing with kings takes away blessings.
46. Evil viziers are the helpers of tyrants and the brothers of wrongdoers.
47. Oppressive governors are the worst of the ummah and opponents of the [true] leaders.
48. Do not separate from your [rightful] ruler, thereby making the consequence of your affair blameworthy.
49. Never visit kings frequently, for they are such that if you accompany them they will become weary of you and if you advise them sincerely they will debase you.
50. Do not desire to mingle with kings, for indeed they consider replying salutations to be too much speech and striking the necks to be insignificant punishment.
51. Do not associate with the king in times of disturbance and upheaval, for indeed the sea is such that even when it is calm, the seafarer barely manages to remain safe in it, so how would he fare with its turbulent winds and the tumultuous waves?!
52. Never desire to gain the affection of kings, for indeed they will forsake you when you are most intimate with them and they will cut you off when you are closest to them.
53. There is no prosperity [in the place] where the king passes (or is oppressive).
54. When the intention of the king changes, the times change (or get corrupted).
55. When the king becomes enraged, Satan takes control [over him].
56. Seeking power [and sovereignty] is from the deceptions of Satan.
57. The justice of a king is the life of the populace and the prosperity of the creatures.
58. The worst of all rulers is one who is ruled by his vain desire.
59. The worst of rulers is one whose subjects are oppressed.
60. The king's courtier is like a person who is riding on a lion, people are envious of his status while he is more aware of his own [dangerous] position.
61. Partnership in sovereignty leads to turmoil.
62. Holding a post with kings is a key of tribulation and the seed of affliction.
63. The best king is the just one.
64. The best king is the one who has the most continent soul.
65. The best of all kings in character is one whose justice prevails over all the people.
66. The most exalted of rulers is one who is not ruled by his vain desires.
67. The most exalted of kings is one who has control over himself and spreads justice.
68. The best of kings is one whose action and intention are good, and who is just with his army and his people.
69. The king who is in the best condition is one whose subjects become prosperous in his prosperity and whose justice prevails over all his people.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

70. The people whom one should be cautious of the most are the tyrannical king, the powerful enemy and the disloyal friend.
71. The most intelligent of kings is he who governs himself for the people in a way that will remove any proof against him and governs the people in a way that affirms his proof against them.
72. The kings are [supposed to be] defenders of the religion.
73. The king's crown is his justice.
74. It is a right upon the king that he should govern himself [first] before his troops.
75. The best of commanders is one who has command over himself.
76. The best king is one who annihilates oppression and enlivens justice.
77. The lassitude of a king is more harmful for the people than the oppression of a king.
78. The alms-tax of the king is assisting the aggrieved.
79. The worst of kings is one who opposes justice.
80. The worst of viziers is one who is a vizier to the vicious.
81. Guard your position near your king, and be cautious of not being lowered from it by negligence towards that which raised you to it.
82. Works are [only] accomplished by the [right] workers.

621. MĀLIK AL-ASHTAR

1. He ('a) said about al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i when he was informed about his death (may Allah have mercy upon him): If he was a mountain, he would have been a great one, no hoofed animal would have reached its peak and no bird would have been able to fly over it.
2. He ('a) said about al-Ashtar al-Nakha'i: He is the sword of Allah that does not fail to strike and is not blunt in its edge; he is not impressed by any innovations nor is he led astray by misguidance [and temptation].

622. ANGELS

1. Verily with every person there are two angels who protect him, and when his time is up they leave him alone with his impending death, and verily the [decreed] lifetime [of a person] is a strong protective shield.
2. He ('a) said about angels: They are captives of faith; neither divergence nor deviation breaks them from its hold.

623. THE SLAVE

1. Many a slave is such that one cannot bear his separation.

624. DISPOSITION

1. One whose disposition is good [with those who are under him] remains safe from annihilation.

625. ONE WHO IS FED-UP

1. One who is fed-up has no [sense of] brotherhood.
2. One who is fed-up has no magnanimity.
3. Never feel secure from the one who is fed-up [with you] even if he is endowed with gifts for indeed there is no enjoyment in lightening for the one who is plunged into darkness.
4. There is no brotherhood for the one who is fed-up.
5. There is no friendship for the one who is fed-up.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

626. IRRITATION

1. Irritation (or kingship) corrupts brotherhood.

627. THE INACCESSIBLE

1. Every inaccessible thing is difficult to obtain and seek.

628. TO PUT [OTHERS] UNDER OBLIGATION

1. Putting someone under obligation blackens the favour.
2. Obligation is the corruptor of good actions.
3. Obligation spoils the favour.
4. Obligation corrupts the good act.
5. Obligation corrupts the favour.
6. There is wickedness with obligation.
7. Doing acts of kindness along with obligation is vileness.
8. The bane of generosity is obligation.
9. Through obligation the favour is spoilt.
10. By putting a lot of obligation, the good action is spoilt.
11. Prolonged obligation spoils the pureness of a good turn.
12. One who puts an obligation [on others] by his good action has oppressed magnanimity.
13. The oppression of favours is [through] the repulsiveness of [putting others under] obligation.
14. Too much obligation spoils the good action.
15. One who puts an obligation [on others] with his kind act drops [and forgoes] his gratitude.
16. One who puts obligation with his goodness has spoilt the good act that he has done.
17. Whoever puts an obligation with his favour, it is as if he has not done a favour.
18. One who puts obligation with his good action corrupts it.
19. Nothing spoils good actions like putting [others under] obligation.
20. He who puts an obligation [on others] has not made his grant pleasing.
21. One who puts [others under] obligation with his good act has not perfected it.
22. He who puts [others under] a lot of obligation has not made his good turn felicitous.
23. The sin of the charity given by the one who puts obligation is greater than its reward.
24. One who puts [others under] obligation does no good to others.
25. There is no good deed with obligation.
26. There is no pleasure in the good turn of the obliger.
27. There is no evil quality more repulsive than [putting others under] obligation.
28. people of goodness and beneficence, do not put [others under] obligation with your favours for indeed favours and good turns are nullified by the repulsiveness of [putting others under] obligations.
29. Beware of putting obligations with your good acts for indeed [putting others under] obligation spoils favours.

629. DEATH

1. Death clings to you more closely than your own shadows and has greater authority over you than [you have over] yourselves.
2. Continuously remember death and remember what you will face after death; and never wish for death except after being sure that you have fulfilled the condition for security [in the Hereafter].
3. Increase your remembrance of death and of the place you have to go suddenly and return to after death, until it comes to you while you are on your guard against it and have prepared yourself for it, and let it not come over you suddenly thereby taking you by surprise.
4. Prepare yourselves for death for indeed it overshadows you.
5. Let your ears hear the call of death before it calls you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

6. Remember the destroyer of pleasures and the spoiler of lustful desires and the caller towards separation.
7. Beware of death and be adequately prepared for it, [for by this] you will be happy in your place of [final] return.
8. Beware of insufficient provisions and increase your preparations for your departure.
9. Is there nobody who is ready to meet his Lord before his soul leaves [his body]?
10. The best gift for a believer is death.
11. More severe than death is that which one seeks to be freed from through death.
12. Verily one who walks on the face of the earth will surely end up inside it.
13. Verily it behoves you to prepare for the matter about the timing of whose sudden occurrence you have no knowledge of before it overcomes you.
14. Verily this matter has not started with you nor will it end with you, for this companion of yours travels, so consider him to have gone on one of his travels, and if he comes back to you [then so be it], otherwise you are [all] going towards him [and will meet him].
15. Verily the one who approaches, bringing with him [either everlasting] felicity or wretchedness, is deserving of the best preparation.
16. Indeed the absent one who is driven forward by the [succession of the] new night and day, is indeed worthy of a quick return.
17. Verily in front of you there is a path that covers a long distance, and severe hardships, and you cannot do without good exploration and acquiring the necessary amount of provisions.
18. Verily our statement: "Indeed we belong to Allah" is an affirmation we make to ourselves that we are owned and our statement: "Indeed we will return to Him" is an affirmation to ourselves that we will die.
19. Verily before you is an arduous mountain-pass [that is difficult to traverse] where the one with a light burden will be in a better condition than the one with a heavy burden and the one who has to go through it slowly will be worse off than the one who can pass through swiftly. Indeed its place of descent for you inevitably leads either to Paradise or hellfire.
20. Verily this death is a swift seeker - neither does the steadfast escape it nor does the fleer frustrate it.
21. Verily death is a relief for the one who was a slave to his lust and a prisoner of his vain desire, because the more his life lengthened the more his sins would increase and his offenses against his soul would become worse.
22. Verily death has agonies that are more terrible than can ever be described or comprehended by the intellects of the people of this world.
23. Verily death has been tied to your forelocks whilst this world coils behind you.
24. Verily death is a visitor who is not loved, a killer who is not held accountable and an invincible adversary.
25. Departure [from this world] is imminent.
26. Death is soothing.
27. The matter is near.
28. Death is expiration [and loss of opportunity].
29. Death is a heedless watchman (or friend).
30. Death is the gate of the Hereafter.
31. White hair [of old age] is a messenger of death.
32. Death is the first justice of the Hereafter.
33. Death is preferable to vileness.
34. Death is separation from the transient abode and a journey to the everlasting abode.
35. Verily you are on the run from the death whose fleer is not saved and must eventually meet it.
36. Verily behind you is a swift seeker in the form of death, so do not be negligent.
37. Verily you are all running away from the death which will take you if you remain steadfast [to resist it] and will catch up with you if you [try to] flee.
38. When death arrives, hopes are exposed.
39. When one cannot remain secure from the onslaught of death, then not being prepared for it is incompetence.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

40. Deaths cut off hopes.
41. When you are moving away [from this world] and death is moving towards you, then how quickly you will meet each other!
42. When the bringer of the news of death comes frequently to you, he will [soon also] announce your death to others.
43. The one who does not prepare for death and take benefit of respite is negligent of the onslaught of death.
44. Begin your journey for you have been pushed forward and prepare for death for it has overshadowed you.
45. Remembrance of death makes the means [and comforts] of this world seem trivial.
46. Sometimes the choker (or drinker) is choked by water [and dies] before quenching his thirst.
47. Death is the cause of loss.
48. Fill yourselves with desire for the bounties of Paradise, [and] you will love death and loathe [this worldly] life.
49. I am amazed at the one who forgets death while he sees others dying [around him].
50. I am amazed at the person who sees his body and his lifespan decreasing every day and still does not make preparations for death.
51. I am amazed at the one who fears the ambush [of death] and still does not desist.
52. The end of death is loss.
53. The absent death is more deserving of being awaited and is closer in its approach [than any other traveller whose return is expected].
54. In death there is [either] delight or regret.
55. In every soul there is death.
56. In death there is comfort for the felicitous.
57. Death may [at times] be hastened.
58. Every expected thing [eventually] arrives.
59. Every comer is near.
60. Every near one is close by.
61. Every person will meet his death.
62. How can one who is sought by death remain safe?
63. How can you forget death while its signs are [constantly] reminding you [of it]?
64. For every rising one there is a setting.
65. For every [being with a] soul there is death.
66. For every living thing there is death.
67. For all [beings with] souls there is death.
68. The affluent person will never be saved from death because of his abundant wealth.
69. The poor person will never be saved from death because of his poverty.
70. If death could be bought, the affluent would have surely bought it.
71. One who dies, passes away.
72. One who is certain of the [eventual] departure [from this world] prepares for the journey.
73. One who sees death with the eyes of his certitude, sees it nearby.
74. One who sees death with the eyes of his hope, sees it far away.
75. One who remembers death forgets his aspirations.
76. One who recalls the distance of his journey, prepares [for it].
77. One who frequently remembers death is saved from the deceptions of this world.
78. One who is missed by the arrow of death is fettered by old age.
79. One who anticipates death hastens towards good deeds.
80. One who visualizes death before his very own eyes, the affairs of this world become easy [and trivial] for him.
81. One who frequently remembers death is pleased with whatever suffices him of this world.
82. Whoever frequently remembers death, his desire in [the pleasures of] this world is reduced.
83. Whoever frequently remembers death is satisfied with the little he possesses of this world.
84. Whoever has [the angel of] death given charge over him, is overrun and annihilated by it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

85. One who is sought by death cannot be saved from it.
86. One who counts tomorrow as part of his lifetime has not recognized the reality of death.
87. How beneficial death is for the one who has filled his heart with faith and God-wariness!
88. The deaths of this world are easier to bear than the deaths [and chastisements] of the Hereafter.
89. We are the helpers of death and our lives are targets of mortality, so how can we expect to live forever while the night and day do not elevate anything in status but that they quickly destroyed that which they have built and separated that which they have brought together.
90. Are the people who have been given time to live [in this world] awaiting anything but the time of death, while the hour is close and the journey is at hand?
91. Can the near ones repel [death] from you, or can the wailing [of the women and children] be of any benefit to you?
92. Far be it for death to lose the one whom it seeks or for the one who flees it to get saved [from it].
93. The arrival of death cuts off action and exposes [false] hopes.
94. The arrival of death expunges respite, brings the appointed time closer and dashes [one's] hope.
95. There is no soother like death.
96. Death does not desist from extermination [and will annihilate all].
97. There is none whose arrival is nearer than death.
98. There is no absent one that approaches quicker than death.
99. There is no blame on the one who flees from his death.
100. Destiny holds sway over the expectations [and plans of man] until death occurs in the [execution of his own] plans.
101. It behoves the one who knows about the quickness of his departure to be well prepared for the move.
102. Death is preferable to the shame of disgrace.
103. Death comes to every living thing.

Notes

1. Or: In every breath there is death.
2. Here the 'comer' being referred to is death.

630. THE DEAD

1. Do not remember the dead negatively [by recalling their bad actions] for this suffices as a sin.

631. WEALTH AND RICHES

1. Wealth honours its possessor in this world and abases him in front of Allah, the Glorified.
2. Wealth honours its possessor as long as he spends it and abases him when he is miserly with it.
3. Wealth and children are the ornaments of this worldly life while good action is the tillage of the Hereafter.
4. Wealth elevates its possessor in this world but lowers him in the Hereafter.
5. Wealth is a burden for its possessor except that which he sends ahead from it [for the Hereafter].
6. Wealth is the tribulation of the soul and the plunder of calamities.
7. Wealth is reduced by spending [it] whereas knowledge grows when it is given away [and shared with others].
8. Hold on to wealth according to the extent of your need, and forward the rest for the day of your indigence.
9. Beware of reserving for yourself (or concealing) that which all the people have an equal right to and turning a blind eye to what is manifest for the onlookers otherwise it will surely be taken from you and given to someone else.
10. The best wealth is that by which the freemen become enthralled.
11. The best of all wealth is that by which men become enthralled.
12. The purest wealth is that which has been earned by its lawful means.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

13. The most beneficial wealth is that by which the obligatory is fulfilled.
14. The purest wealth is that with which the Hereafter is bought.
15. The best wealth is that which has been earned by its lawful means.
16. The best wealth is that which has the best effect upon you.
17. The best wealth is that by which the rights [of others] are fulfilled.
18. Verily your wealth is for the one who praises you in your lifetime and the one who vilifies you after your death.
19. Verily a person comes to that which he has sent forward [of his good deeds] and regrets [about] that which he has left behind.
20. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has ordained the provisions of the poor in the wealth of the rich, so no poor person goes hungry but because of the withholding of the rich, and Allah will question them about this.
21. Surely the person with the greatest regret on the Day of Resurrection will be the man who earns wealth without obeying [the commandments of] Allah, then a man inherits his wealth and spends it in obedience to Allah and through it enters Paradise whereas the first one enters Hell because of it.
22. Verily when a man dies people say: 'What has he left behind?' while the angels say: 'What has he sent forward?' Your forefathers are for Allah! Send some of your wealth forward, so that it may be a provision for you [in the Hereafter], and do not leave all of it behind such that it becomes a [heavy] burden on you.
23. Verily the best wealth is that which earns praise and gratitude and brings about reward and recompense.
24. Verily the best wealth is that which bequeaths to you a provision [for the Hereafter] and a legacy, and earns you praise and reward.
25. Indeed the best wealth is that by which the freeman is enthralled and [by which] reward is earned.
26. Verily your wealth cannot fulfil the needs of all the people, so reserve it specifically for the followers of the truth.
27. Wealth is reckoning [in the Hereafter].
28. Wealth is a borrowed loan [and will not remain with you forever].
29. Verily that which is in your possession has had an owner before you and will go to someone after you. You are only amassing [wealth] for one of two kinds of people: either the one who will use what you amassed in obedience to Allah, thereby becoming felicitous by that which made you wretched, or the one who will use what you amassed in disobedience to Allah, thereby becoming wretched by what you amassed, and neither of these two deserve to be preferred by you over yourself or of being carried by you on your back.
30. Wealth is the plunder of calamities.
31. Wealth is a solace [and comfort] for the heir (or heirs).
32. Wealth strengthens one who [is weak and] lacks support.
33. People serve wealth, wealth does not serve people.
34. Wealth is the leader of the wicked.
35. Wealth is the object of desires.
36. Wealth strengthens one's hopes.
37. Wealth manifests the intrinsic natures of the people and their characters.
38. Wealth corrupts the outcomes and extends the [false] hopes.
39. Wealth is the cause of trials and the plunder of calamities.
40. Wealth is the inviter of difficulty and the riding mount of hardship.
41. Wealth does not benefit you until it parts from you.
42. Verily only the wealth which you send ahead for your Hereafter is yours, while that which you leave behind belongs to your heirs.
43. When you accumulate wealth, then you are [actually] a representative for another person who will rejoice with it while you become miserable.
44. When you send forth your wealth for your Hereafter and leave [the affair of] your heirs in the hands of Allah, you will be felicitous by that which you have forwarded and Allah will take good care of those whom you leave behind.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

45. It is by overcoming [one's] fears that wealth is acquired.
46. The affluence of this world is the poverty of the Hereafter.
47. Abundance of wealth causes destruction, makes one rebellious and perishes.
48. Love of wealth is the cause of tribulations and love of leadership is the root of tribulations.
49. Love of wealth corrupts the [final] outcome.
50. Love of wealth strengthens [false] hopes and corrupts actions.
51. Love of wealth weakens faith and corrupts certitude.
52. The best of your wealth is that which safeguards your dignity.
53. The best wealth is that which enthrals a freeman.
54. The best wealth is that which helps one perform noble deeds.
55. The best of your wealth is that which suffices you.
56. Take from the most precious of your possessions and spend it on that for which your Lord will elevate your lofty deeds.
57. Many a person accumulates [wealth] for one who is not grateful to him.
58. The alms-tax of wealth is benefitting others [with it].
59. The worst [type of] wealth is that which earns censure.
60. The worst wealth is that which does not benefit [and fulfil the need of] its owner.
61. The worst wealth is that from which nothing is spent in the way of Allah and the [obligatory] zakāt of which is not paid.
62. The worst wealth is that from which the right of Allah, the Glorified, is not given.
63. The owner of wealth is faces difficulty and one who gains victory through evil [means] has [actually] been defeated.
64. Little [wealth] that suffices is better than a lot which makes one insolent.
65. The little that saves [one from hellfire] is better than plenty that destroys.
66. Send forth some [of your wealth] as it will be [beneficial] for you [in the Hereafter], and do not leave all of it behind as this will become a burden for you.
67. How many a person accumulates that which he will leave behind.
68. How often it is that one who gets less, benefits while one who gets more, loses.
69. Increased wealth corrupts the hearts and gives rise to sins.
70. Be a [generous] donor with your [own] wealth while being cautious with the wealth of others.
71. That portion of your wealth which teaches you a lesson and earns you gratitude will never go [to waste].
72. He who does not reform his [means of earning or spending] wealth has not earned it.
73. One who does not spend [his] wealth [in the way of Allah] has not been blessed with wealth.
74. That portion of your wealth which is used to safeguard your dignity has not gone [to waste].
75. That part of your wealth which is used to fulfil your obligations has not been lost.
76. A person does not give his wealth to the one who has no right to it, or his favour to one who is not deserving of it, but that Allah deprives him of their gratefulness and their love, too, would be for others.
77. One who gives [generously from] his wealth makes [others] subservient [to him].
78. One who earns his wealth from unlawful sources damages his Hereafter.
79. One who accumulates wealth so that he can benefit people [with it] is obeyed by them and one who accumulates [it] for himself is disregarded by them.
80. One who considers wealth to be precious, regards people as insignificant.
81. Whoever spends his wealth in the way of Allah, He quickly replaces it [for him].
82. Whoever withholds wealth from the one who praises him bequeaths it to one who does not praise him.
83. One who earns wealth from sources that are unlawful, spends it in the places that are unworthy [and inappropriate].
84. One who does not let go [of his wealth] while he is praised will have to leave [it] while he is vilified.
85. One who does not forward his wealth for his Hereafter while he is [sure to be] rewarded [for it], leaves it behind while he is sinful.
86. One whose wealth is stripped away by disasters, gains from it the benefit of caution.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

87. Never waste your wealth in other than what is good [and right].
88. Do not spend your wealth in sinful acts thereby coming before your Lord without any [good] deed.
89. Never leave behind anything from this world, for indeed you will [only] be leaving it for one of two types of people: either the man who uses it in obedience to Allah, so he becomes felicitous by that which made you wretched, or the man who uses it in disobeying Allah, in which case you will have been a helper for him in his disobedience, and neither of these two deserves to be preferred by you over yourself.
90. Love of wealth and praise do not go together.
91. There is no pride in wealth except when accompanied with generosity.
92. Little that suffices is better than a lot which makes one insolent.
93. Worldly wealth and power turns the mistake of its owner into a proper act and the proper act of his opponent into a mistake.

Notes

1. Meaning the natural feeling of indebtedness a person feels when someone helps him, financially or otherwise.
2. The Arabs use this phrase to show reverence and respect for a person or persons by connecting them to Allah.
3. Or: People acquire wealth, wealth does not acquire [and win over] people.

632. INCLINATION

1. Everything inclines towards its [own] kind.
2. Every person inclines towards one who is like him.
3. Every bird stays close to its [own] kind.

633. NOBILITY AND THE NOBLE

1. Nobility is [attained] by adorning [oneself] with generosity and fulfilling [one's] promises.
2. Verily nobility is nothing but the shunning of disgraceful actions.
3. The habits of the noble ones are: generosity, suppressing anger, forgiveness and forbearance.
4. The symbol of nobility is doing good to people.
5. It is from nobility for a man to spend his wealth and safeguard his dignity.
6. Acting on the principle of justice is from the signs of nobility.
7. The nobility of a man is evinced by the paucity of his speech and his merit is deduced from his abundant tolerance.

634. ATTENTIVENESS

1. Be a community that is cried out to so they wake up.
2. Alertness of the eyes does not benefit while the hearts are negligent.
3. Is there no one who will wake from his slumber before the time of his death?!

635. PROPHETS, MESSENGERS AND IMAMS

1. Listen to your godly leader, keep your hearts open for him and listen [to him] if he calls out to you.
2. Listen to (or accept) advice from the one who gifts it to you and preserve it in your minds.
3. Messengers of Allah, the Glorified, are interpreters of the truth and intermediaries between the Creator and the creation.
4. The Messengers of Allah have a clear elucidation for every [divine] command.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

636. SUCCESS, PROSPERITY AND SALVATION

1. The most successful of you are the most truthful among you.
2. The person who attains his objective the most is one who has intelligence and is mild-mannered.
3. If you seek of prosperity, then reject negligence and diversion, and espouse diligence and effort.
4. The bane of success is laziness.
5. At times success may be attained.
6. The healing of a wound may at times lead to disability.
7. How close is success to one who is quick to release [and send forth his provisions for the Hereafter].
8. The basis of salvation is espousing faith and [having] true certitude.
9. None is successful in attaining salvation but the one who fulfils the requirements of faith.
10. There is no salvation for one who has no faith.
11. He from whose evil people are not safe, is not saved from [the punishment of] Allah, the Glorified.
12. There is salvation in three things: espousing truth, shunning falsehood and working hard.
13. How can one who flees from Allah be saved?!

637. HELPING AND SEEKING HELP

1. One who seeks help from the lowly is abased.
2. One who does not help [others] is not helped.

638. SECRET CONVERSATION

1. There is no good in secret conversation except for two people: the articulating scholar or the cautious listener [who can keep secrets].

639. REMORSE AND REGRET

1. Remorse is one of the two [forms of] repentance.
2. Be remorseful about the evil that you have done and do not regret the good act that you have performed.
3. Remorse is [a form of] repentance.
4. Being remorseful for a misdeed causes it to be wiped off.
5. Being remorseful for a misdeed is [a form of] repentance.
6. Being remorseful for [committing] a sin prevents one from returning to
7. Remorsefulness of the heart covers up the sin and purges the wrongdoing.

640. THE REMORSEFUL

1. Blessed is every remorseful one who regrets his mistake and makes up for his past error.
2. One who is remorseful has repented.

641. WARNING

1. Warning is vindication.

642. DISPUTE

1. Do not argue with a vile person for he will be bold [and disrespectful] with you.
2. Do not dispute with the fools and do not be infatuated with women, for indeed this degrades the intelligent ones.
3. Disputing with the ignoble ones disgraces the [status of the] eminent ones.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

643. THE HOME

1. A beautiful home is one of the two Paradises.
2. One whose space is restricted, his comfort is less.
3. Avoid [building homes in] places of negligence and wickedness and [places where] there is a paucity of supporters for the obedience of Allah.
4. How many a builder has built that which he does not reside in.

644. REMAINING PURE AND FREE FROM SIN

1. Remaining free from sins is the worship of the penitents.
2. Keeping away from sin is the essence of astuteness.
3. Remaining free from sin is the beginning of nobility.
4. Keeping away from sin is the sign of chastity.
5. Keeping away from sin is one of the traits of the immaculate souls.
6. Be free from sin and you will be pious.

645. OUTING

1. Sometimes an outing may turn into a bitter experience.
2. An outing may turn into an agony.

646. THE DEVOTEE

1. A person may be a devotee while he [actually] has no religion.

647. WOMEN

1. Women are the greater of the two temptations.
2. Women are [like] meat on the butcher's block, except that which is protected [and defended].
3. Beware of evil women, and be on your guard [even] from the good among them.
4. Beware of excessive infatuation with women and being tempted (or deceived) by the pleasures of this world, for indeed the one who is infatuated with women faces trials and the one who is tempted by the pleasures [of this world] is abased.
5. Beware of consulting with women, for indeed their opinions are inclined towards immaturity and their decisions are infirm; and restrain their gazes [by keeping them behind the veil], for your veiling them is better than being suspicious about them, and their coming out [in public] is not worse than your letting one who cannot be trusted enter their abode; and if you are able to ensure that they do not get acquainted with anybody other than you then do it.
6. Verily women are [only] concerned about the ornaments of this world and [creating] mischief herein.
7. Being infatuated with women is the trait of the foolish.
8. If you see something suspicious from your women, then assign to them a guard who will watch over the old and young [among the family, and not for the women in particular as this will cause them unease], and beware not to continuously scold them for this will incite them to commit sins and make it easy for them to bear the scolding [as they will become accustomed to it].
9. The best of traits for women is the worst of traits for men.
10. Obedience to women is the height of ignorance.
11. Obedience to women degrades the noble ones and destroys the intelligent ones.
12. Obedience to women is the trait of the foolish.
13. Whoever [constantly] delights in women, his mind gets corrupted.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

14. People! Verily women are deficient in faith, lacking in intellect and deficient in shares. As for their deficiency in faith, it is their abstention from prayers and fasting during their menstrual periods, and as for their deficiency in shares, it is due to their inheritance being half of what is inherited by men, and as for their lacking in intellect, it is because the testimony of two women equals the testimony of one man; so beware of the evil women and be on your guard [even] from those of them who are good.
15. Do not obey women in good [actions] such that they expect [your obedience] in evil.
16. Never be frequently alone with women, for they will become weary of you and you will also become weary of them, and leave a part of yourself and your mind to tarry [away] from them.
17. Let women not bear your burden and [try to] be independent from them as much as possible, for indeed they put many obligations [on you] and are ungrateful for [many of your] favours.
18. The woman is wholly evil, and more evil than her is the fact that man cannot do without her.
19. A woman is a scorpion whose sting is sweet.
20. Verily a woman is only [considered] a plaything, so whoever takes her should cover her.
21. Guarding the woman [from people and places that would harm her chastity] is better for her condition and more lasting for her beauty.
22. Do not give a woman the responsibility that she cannot bear for indeed a woman is [like] a sweet basil and not a strong ruler [who can govern the people].

648. FORGETTING ALLAH

1. Whoever forgets Allah, He makes him forget himself.
2. Forgetting [Allah] is darkness and loss.
3. One who forgets [Allah,] the Glorified, Allah makes him forget himself and blinds his heart.

649. SINCERE ADVICE

1. Sincere advice reaps affection.
2. Giving sincere advice is a characteristic of the noble ones.
3. Sometimes advice is given by one who is not sincere.
4. At times one from whom sincere advice is sought, deceives.
5. Blessed is the one who follows the adviser who guides him and keeps away from the misguided person who leads him to destruction.
6. He who seeks advice from his enemies is indeed ignorant.
7. You have been advised so take the advice, you have been shown [the truth] so see [it], and you have been guided aright so accept the guidance.
8. You have been guided if you seek guidance and have been admonished if you seek admonishment and have been advised if you seek advice.
9. How can one who takes pleasure in [acts that bring] disgrace benefit from sincere advice?!
10. One who trades with you by [giving you] advice has indeed made your profit abound.
11. One who trades with you in advice is your partner in profit.
12. One of the best forms of advice is disclosing the ugly traits [of a person to him so that he may change].
13. Being sincere [in giving advice] is from the best [teachings] of religion.
14. Pointing [people] towards reconciliation is the best advice.
15. The bitterness of sincere advice is more beneficial than the sweetness of deceit.
16. Your sincere adviser is concerned about you, shows kindness to you, considers your outcomes and rectifies of your shortcomings; so in obedience to him lies your development and in opposition to him, your corruption.
17. Your advice [when given] in front of other people is [considered] a rebuke.
18. Never reject the [advice of a] sincere adviser and never assume the one who counsels you to be a deceiver.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. Do not take advice from one who has lost his senses and do not trust one who has an ignoble background, for indeed the one who has lost his senses deceives while he thinks he is offering good advice, and one who has an ignoble background corrupts while he thinks he is rectifying.
20. There is no sincerity like [giving] sincere advice.
21. There is no admonisher more effective than sincere advice.
22. There is no good in a community that does not sincerely advise [each other] and does not love sincere advisers.
23. The wicked one does not sincerely advise anyone except out of desire or fear, so when the desire or fear disappears, he returns to his true nature.
24. People, accept advice from the one who advises you and receive it from the one who carries it to you with obedience, and know that Allah, the Glorified, has not praised but the most attentive of hearts to wise counsel and only those people who are quickest in responding to the truth; and know that the greater struggle is the struggle against one's self, so occupy yourself with struggling against your selves and you will be felicitous, reject idle talk and you will be safe, increase in your remembrance of Allah and you will gain, [and] be brothers to each other, O servants of Allah, and you will be prosperous with the everlasting bounty [of Allah].
25. There is no advice like warning [against evil].
26. One who disobeys his sincere adviser has assisted his adversary.
27. One who turns towards the sincere adviser turns away from evil.
28. One who considers the sincere adviser to be a deceiver is engulfed by evil.
29. One who shuns the advice of a sincere adviser is burnt by the evil schemes of the one who harbours enmity against him.
30. Whoever opposes [good] advice, perishes.
31. At times the [only] benefit a sincere adviser gains [for his advice] is suspicion [about his motives].
32. The one from whom [good] advice is sought may at times deceive.
33. At times one who is not a sincere adviser may give good advice.
34. How can one who deceives himself give sincere advice to others?
35. Sometimes the reliable advisor may betray [you] and the one who is [deemed] disloyal may give good advice.
36. Whoever gives you sincere advice has indeed helped you.
37. Do not deceive the one who seeks advice from you.
38. One who gives you sincere advice has shown concern for you.
39. He who deems the sincere adviser to be a deceiver, considers evil to be good.
40. One who accepts [good] advice remains safe from disgrace.

650. SUPPORTING THE TRUTH

1. If you must be fanatical, then be fanatical in assisting the truth and aiding the aggrieved.
2. If you had not turned away from assisting the truth, you would not have felt weakness in overpowering falsehood.
3. One who assists the truth shall be successful.
4. Assist Allah with your heart, your tongue and your hand, for indeed Allah, the Glorified, has guaranteed assistance to one who assists Him.
5. One who neglects to assist his friend is awoken by the footsteps of his [advancing] enemy.
6. He who sharpens the spearhead of anger for the sake of Allah acquires the strength to defeat the stalwarts of falsehood.
7. One who seeks assistance through patience will not be deprived of victory.

651. SUPPORTING FALSEHOOD

1. One who assists falsehood faces loss.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

652. SEEKING SUPPORT

1. Whoever seeks support from the enemies of Allah deserves to be forsaken.
2. Whoever seeks support from Allah attains a glorious victory.

653. ONE WHOSE SUPPORTER IS ALLAH

1. One whose helper is Allah gains victory over his enemy and gains [in Him] the support [like that] of a [large] group.

654. SEEKING JUSTICE

1. The virtuous one does not seek justice from the vicious.
2. A scholar does not seek justice from an ignorant person.
3. The noble person does not seek justice from the wicked.
4. Justice can never be sought from the foolish one except by being forbearing with him.

655. EQUITY

1. Equity is [a source of] comfort, evil is [a sign of] impudence.
2. Equity is a symbol of nobility.
3. Equity is a trait of the honourable ones.
4. Equity is the most superior of merits.
5. Equity removes differences and brings about harmony.
6. Being equitable with others is like being just [while] in authority.
7. Indeed the greatest reward is the reward of [justice and] equity.
8. Equity is the best of traits.
9. Equity causes love to last.
10. Equity unites the hearts.
11. Verily if you show fairness to others, Allah will bring you closer [to Him].
12. Through fairness relationships last.
13. Three types of people never seek justice from three other types: the intelligent person from the fool, the virtuous from the vicious, and the noble one from the wicked.
14. It is on equity that affection is established.
15. Treat all the [other] people with equity but treat the believers with altruism [and prefer them over yourself].
16. The height of equity is for a person to be equitable with himself.
17. Whoever is equitable [to others] will be shown fairness.
18. One who is not equitable is not associated with [by others].
19. Whoever does not show fairness, Allah takes away [his power and] ability from him.
20. One whose equity increases, [all the] people bear witness to his justice.
21. Whoever adorns himself with equity attains the [lofty] ranks of honour.
22. One who does not show fairness to you out of his [sense of] shame will not be fair with you because of his religion.
23. With equity brotherhood lasts.
24. Equity is the ornament of [power and] authority.

656. THE EQUITABLE

1. The equitable person has many friends and intimates.
2. The most equitable of people is one who shows fairness himself, without being compelled to do so by any authority.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Indeed it is from the merit of a man to be fair with others, and to do good to the one who does him evil.
4. The equitable person is noble whereas the oppressor is wicked.

657. THE VIEWED

1. There is no good in that which is viewed except when accompanied with a good source of information [or good elocution].

Notes

1. Or: There is no good in the viewable exterior except when the interior is [also] good.

658. BEING SYSTEMATIC IN WORK

1. Assign for each one of your servants work that you hold him responsible for, as indeed this is more appropriate to ensure that they do not depend upon one another in your service.

659. BLESSING

1. Blessing is linked to gratitude and gratitude is linked to increase [in blessings], and these two are linked together in one chain, for increase [in blessings] from Allah, the Glorified, will never cease until the gratitude of the thankful one ceases.
2. Seek good out of every blessing that Allah has bestowed upon you and do not waste any favour of Allah over you.
3. Let the effect of that which Allah, the Glorified, has blessed you with be seen on you.
4. Seek the perfection of Allah's blessing upon you through patience in obedience to Him and preserving that which He has commanded you to preserve [and act upon] of His book.
5. Beware of the slipping away of blessings, for not everything that runs away comes back.
6. Indeed, one of the blessings is affluence, but good health is better than affluence, and the God-wariness of the heart is [even] better than good health.
7. The best things that Allah, the Glorified, has blessed his servants with are: knowledge, intelligence, power and justice.
8. The person who is in the best condition of all people is he who makes present blessings last by being grateful for them and gets those that are lost restored through patience.
9. The least that you must do for Allah, the Most High, is ensure that you do not use His blessings as a means of disobeying [and sinning against] Him.
10. Verily Allah, the Glorified, has certain selected servants upon whom He bestows blessings for the benefit of the people, causing these [blessings] to remain in their possession as long as they grant them [to the people], but if they withhold them [from the people], He takes away these blessings from them and transfers them to others.
11. Verily Allah, the Most High, bestows the blessing of benevolence in [times of] ease and the blessing of purification [in times] of hardship.
12. Blessings last through gratitude.
13. If you are able to ensure that there is no [other] benefactor between you and Allah then do so.
14. The only way that the value of blessings can be known is by suffering their contraries.
15. When you see Allah continuously sending blessings upon you despite your sins, then [know that] it is a means of driving you [towards greater punishment].
16. When a blessing comes down to you then receive it with gratitude.
17. When you see your Lord sending continuous blessings upon you, then be careful.
18. By the befalling of calamities blessings become roiled.
19. Many a blessed person is gradually being driven [towards punishment] by those blessings.
20. The alms-tax of blessings is doing good to others.
21. The adornment of blessings is keeping ties with [one's] near relatives.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

22. The cessation of blessings is [caused] by withholding the rights of Allah from them and falling short in showing gratitude for them.
23. The cause of cessation of a blessing is ingratitude.
24. In every blessing there is a reward.
25. Every bounty of this world is [headed towards] destruction.
26. Every blessing from which good is done [to others] is indeed safe from being taken away and is protected from vicissitudes.
27. Whenever the blessing of an ignorant person becomes good, his ugliness in it increases.
28. Let the effect of what Allah has blessed you with be visible on you.
29. Nothing has the ability to make blessings last like showing gratitude for them and nothing beautifies them like granting them [to others].
30. Whoever enumerates his favours [on others] effaces his munificence.
31. One who takes the help of a blessing [in order] to sin is indeed an ingrate.
32. The one upon whom the blessings of Allah are abundant, the people's needs towards him also abound (so if he fulfils with it what Allah, the Glorified, has made obligatory for him, then he makes it last, and if he refuses what Allah, the Glorified, has made obligatory from it, then he has exposed it to cessation).
33. Whoever extends his hand to bestow favours [to others] has protected his [own] blessing from cessation.
34. It is incumbent upon the one whom Allah has munificently blessed to be generous in granting favours to the people.
35. A truthful friend is one of the blessings [of Allah].
36. Being adorned with generosity and chastity is one of the most perfect blessings.
37. Nothing safeguards blessings like granting them to others.
38. Nothing guards blessings like gratitude.
39. How great are the blessings of Allah, the Glorified, in this world, yet how small they are in comparison to the blessings of the Hereafter.
40. How close bounty is to woe!
41. Allah has not bestowed any blessing on a servant who then does injustice with it but that he becomes deserving of it being taken away from him by Allah.
42. The blessings of the ignorant are like a garden on a cesspit.
43. The blessing that is not appreciated is like the evil that is not forgiven.
44. The blessings of Allah, the Most High, are greater than can be appreciated, except with the help of Allah, and the sins of mankind are greater than can be forgiven, except what Allah pardons [out of His mercy].
45. We ask Allah, the Glorified, for the completion of His favours [upon us] and for the ability to hold on to His rope.
46. Do not waste any of the blessings that Allah, the Glorified, has blessed you with, and let the effect of what He has blessed you with be visible on you.
47. Blessings are not guarded but by gratitude.
48. Son of Adam, when you see Allah, the Glorified, continuously sending you His blessings then beware of Him, and secure the blessings by being grateful for them.
49. The least that is owed to the one who bestows blessings is that no sin should be committed with his blessing.
50. Verily the inability to commit sins is a blessing.

660. TROUBLE

1. To the extent of happiness there is trouble.
2. There is no pleasure with trouble.

661. AVERSION

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Everything is averse to its opposite.
2. Turn away from the path of mutual aversion and abandon the crowns of boastfulness.

662. THE SOUL AND HOLDING IT TO ACCOUNT

1. The noble soul is not affected by misfortunes.
2. The honourable soul does not find it difficult to [spend wealth in order to] acquire provisions.
3. The ignoble soul does not separate from [its] vile attributes.
4. A person's upbraiding of his own soul is evidence of the gravity of his intellect and the symbol of his abundant merit.
5. Souls are free but the hands of the intellects hold their reins and protect them from [wretchedness and] misfortune.
6. One who is pleased with himself is cheated and one who is overconfident is faced with affliction.
7. The one who is pleased with himself cannot see his own faults but if he were to know the merits of others, he would cover up (and feel ashamed of) the faults and flaws that are in him.
8. The refractory, alluring soul flatters as the hypocrite flatters and feigns the attribute of an assenting friend, until such a time when it deceives and gains mastery, then it dominates as an enemy would dominate and dictates as the tyrant would dictate, thereby taking one into the places of evil.
9. Honour your soul as long as it aids you in the obedience of Allah.
10. Humiliate your soul as long as it makes you recalcitrant in the disobedience of Allah.
11. Have fear of Allah in your soul, wrest away the control that Satan has over you, turn your attention towards the Hereafter and make [the pleasure of] Allah the object of your striving.
12. Ennoble your soul from every vile quality, even if it drives you to your desires, for indeed you will never be able to compensate for what you have lost of your soul.
13. Make yourself a guardian over your soul and reserve a portion of this world for your Hereafter.
14. Move closer to your soul by retracting from it (I mean that you should move towards your loftier and higher self which has been adapted from the light of your intellect and acts as a barrier between you and the inclinations of your base nature; and by retracting I mean you should retract from the soul that commands to evil and shakes hands with defiance).
15. Restrain your soul from lustful desires and you will remain safe from calamities.
16. Be equitable yourself before equity is sought from you, for indeed that is loftier for your status and more deserving of the pleasure of your Lord.
17. Gain control over your souls by your continuous struggle against it.
18. Occupy yourselves with [acts of] obedience [to Allah], and your tongues with the remembrance [of Allah], and your hearts with acceptance [of His will] in what you love and hate.
19. Restrain these souls for indeed they are very desirous, and if you follow them, they will lead you towards the worst evil.
20. Knowledge about oneself is the more beneficial of the two types of knowledge.
21. Beware of being pleased with yourself thereby increasing the number of those who are displeased with you.
22. Beware of overconfidence for this is one of the biggest traps of Satan.
23. Indeed there is no price for your souls other than Paradise, so do not sell them except [in return] for it.
24. The greatest affliction is poverty of the soul.
25. He who is controlled by lustful desires and enslaved by (worldly) aspirations has degraded his soul.
26. The strongest of people is one who has the greatest command over his soul.
27. The weakest of people is one who is unable to reform his soul.
28. The person with the greatest control over his soul is the one who subdues his anger and kills off his lustful desire.
29. Verily when souls are in harmony they become close [with one another].
30. Verily your souls have [great] value, so do not sell them except for Paradise.
31. Indeed the one who sells his soul for anything other than Paradise suffers great tribulation.
32. Verily these souls are very desirous, if you obey them they will lead you to the depths of evil.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

33. Verily obeying the self and following its vain desires is the root of every tribulation and the cornerstone of every aberrance.
34. Verily the soul has far-reaching desires and continues to be inclined towards disobedience in its desires.
35. Verily this soul commands towards evil so one who neglects it [and does not discipline it] is indomitably driven by it towards sins.
36. Verily your soul is a deceiver; if you trust it, Satan will lead you to commit forbidden acts.
37. Verily the soul commands towards evil and indecency, so whoever trusts it, it deceives him and whoever has confidence in it, it destroys him and whoever is pleased with it, it makes him enter the worst of places.
38. Verily the true believer does not enter his evening and morning but that he distrusts his soul, so he continues to belittle [and find fault with] it and seeks more [good] for it.
39. Verily the soul is a valuable gem, whoever guards it elevates it and whoever does not preserve it abases it.
40. Verily the soul that seeks short-lived desires will surely perish in its quest and will be wretched in its place of return [in the Hereafter].
41. Verily the soul that struggles to acquire the everlasting desires will surely achieve its goal and will be felicitous in its place of return [in the Hereafter].
42. Verily the soul is like the camel that likes to eat bitter grass, and the ear does not retain much of what it hears, so do not cut off your understanding by being importunate with your soul because for each part of the body there is [need for] repose.
43. Verily your soul is your riding mount, if you make it carry more than it can bear, you will kill it and if you treat it with kindness, you will save it.
44. Verily if you contravene this division [and allotment of specific times for specific deeds] then the supererogatory acts you perform do not take the place of the obligatory that you have neglected.
45. Being preoccupied with disciplining the soul is better [for you].
46. Overconfidence [in oneself] is one of the strongest opportunities for Satan.
47. Redressing the corruption of one's soul is the most beneficial accomplishment.
48. Your preoccupation with your own flaws is sufficient to keep [the] shame [of searching for others faults] away from you.
49. If you do not restrain your soul from many of the things that you love out of fear of its displeasure, then vain desires will drive you towards a lot of harm.
50. Verily if you give your [carnal] soul control over yourself, you will corrupt your Hereafter and put you into unending affliction and incessant wretchedness.
51. Verily if you obey your [carnal] souls, they will lead you towards the worst end.
52. Indeed you are just like the one who stabs himself in order to kill the one who is sitting behind him.
53. When you make your soul obey Allah you have honoured it, and if you allow it to disobey Him you have humiliated it.
54. When your soul becomes obstinate with you then be obstinate with it and it will be humble to you, and deceive your soul with regards to yourself, it will yield to you.
55. When you desire the uprightness of your soul then you should adopt moderation, contentment and the reduction of [your] wants.
56. Uprightness of the soul is [attained] through struggle.
57. Take it upon yourselves to discipline your souls and turn them away from their harmful habits.
58. Demand from your soul [the performance of] that which is obligatory upon it and you will be safe from the demands of others, scrutinize it and you will have no need for the scrutiny of others.
59. He (a) said about the one whom he was censuring: His [lower] self dominates him by means of that which he assumes, and he cannot overpower it with what he is certain of. He has made his vain desire his master and he obeys it in all his affairs.
60. Try yourself in the obedience of Allah through patience in performing obligatory acts and perseverance in performing supererogatory acts and duties.
61. Hold yourselves to account [for your deeds] and you will be safe from the fear of Allah and will attain what you desire [from that which is] with Him.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

62. Hold yourself to account for your [own] soul for indeed other souls have someone else who will hold them to account.
63. Hold your souls to account before they are held to account and weigh them before they are weighed.
64. Hold your souls to account for their deeds and seek from them the fulfilment of what is obligatory on them and their taking from the vanescent for the eternal; and gather provisions and make preparations before you are resurrected [on the Day of Reckoning]. 64 كَمْ غَزَا
65. Beautify your souls with chastity and keep away from wastefulness and extravagance.
66. The best souls are the purest among them.
67. Take [good deeds] from yourself for your soul [in the Hereafter], gather provisions today for your tomorrow, benefit from the slumber (or respite) of time and seize the opportunity [to do good while you can].
68. Deceive your heart into worshipping and be gentle with it (or do not compel it), and engage it [in worship] when it is free and lively, except for what has been prescribed as obligatory, for indeed that must be fulfilled [in any case].
69. Take from your bodies and bestow them generously to your souls, and strive to free yourselves before your ransoms are blocked.
70. Oppose your [carnal] soul and you will become upright, mingle with scholars and you will learn.
71. Serving the soul means protecting it from [unlawful] pleasures and acquisitions, training it with knowledge and wisdom and making it strive in performing acts of worship and obedience, for in this lies the salvation for the soul.
72. The cure of the soul is abstaining from vain desires and abstinence from the pleasures of this world.
73. The highest peaks [of success] are not attained but by those who espouse discipline and hard work.
74. Have humility in your soul and honour in your faith; preserve your Hereafter and be open-handed with your worldly possessions.
75. Humble your souls by abandoning [bad] habits, lead them towards performing acts of obedience [and worship], make them bear the burdens of [others'] liabilities, beautify them through noble deeds, and protect them from the filth of sins.
76. Humble your soul through obedience and adorn it with contentment; reduce your wants and be moderate in your earning.
77. May Allah have mercy on the person who holds back the reins of his soul from acts of disobedience to Allah and steers it towards the obedience of Allah by its reins.
78. May Allah have mercy on the person who subdues the inclinations of his soul towards vain desires thereby protecting it, and steers it towards the obedience of Allah by its reins.
79. Deterring the soul from vain desire is the Jihad that is beneficial.
80. Deterring the soul from the vanities of this world is the fruit of reason.
81. Deterring the soul from the temptation of vain desire is the fruit of nobility.
82. Turn your soul away when faced with lustful desires and make it steadfast on the book of Allah when faced with doubts.
83. Restraining the soul and struggling against its vain desires raises one's ranks and multiplies the good deeds.
84. Your satisfaction with yourself is an indication of the corruption of your mind.
85. The person's satisfaction with himself is [always] accompanied by the displeasure of his Lord.
86. A man's satisfaction with himself is evidence of his feeble-mindedness.
87. Turning away from [the pleasures of] this world is the means of reforming the soul.
88. Governing one's soul is the best [form of] administration and the eminency of knowledge is the most honourable pre-eminence.
89. The worst indigence is poverty of the soul.
90. The worst thing is being pleased with oneself.
91. The uprightness of the soul is [in] reduced greed.
92. Reformation of the soul is [achieved by] struggling against vain desires.
93. The misguidance of souls is between the impulses of lust and anger.
94. The fruit of self-appraisal is reformation of the soul.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

95. Weigh your souls before they are weighed and hold them to account before they are held to account, and breathe before the throat is constricted, and follow submissively before you are driven by force.
96. Restrict your souls by holding them accountable and control them by opposition [to their whims].
97. One who holds himself to account, gains.
98. One who holds himself to account becomes felicitous.
99. One who undertakes to hold his soul to account is safe from flattery [and deceit].
100. One who holds himself to account becomes aware of his faults and realizes his sins so he seeks forgiveness for his sins and tries to correct his faults.
101. Blessed is the one who has in his soul that which keeps him
102. preoccupied from the [faults of other] people.
103. Blessed is the one who strives to free his soul before the shortness of breath and the severity of despair [at the time of death].
104. Blessed is he who considers himself as low, gains honour through his obedience [to Allah] and becomes free from want through his contentment.
105. Blessed is the one who has in his soul that which keeps him preoccupied [from others] and the people are at ease from him, and who acts in obedience to Allah, the Glorified.
106. Blessed be the soul that fulfils its duty to its Lord.
107. Purify your souls from the filth of lustful desires and you will attain lofty stations.
108. Whoever disobeys Allah and obeys Satan has oppressed his soul.
109. Whoever is satisfied with the temporary abode in place of the
110. everlasting abode has oppressed himself.
111. Accustom your soul to virtue, for indeed it will make that which is spoken about you good and will make your reward great.
112. Accustom yourself to being engrossed in remembrance [of Allah] and repentance, for indeed this will wipe out your sin and make your reward great.
113. Habituate yourself to [performing] noble deeds and bearing the burden of [others'] liabilities, [for through this] your soul will become honourable, your Hereafter will thrive and those who praise you will increase.
114. Habituate yourself to good intention and virtuous purpose, you will attain success in your aspirations (or endeavours).
115. Habituate yourself to forbearance and eschewing importunity, [and as a result] righteousness will adhere to you.
116. I am amazed at the one who knows himself, how can he feel at ease in the temporary abode [of this world]?!
117. I am amazed at the one who searches for the thing he has lost while
118. he has lost his own soul and does not seek it!
119. I am amazed at the one who oppresses his own soul, how can he be fair to others?!
120. I am amazed at the one who is ignorant about himself, how can he know his Lord?!
121. Compel your souls to abandon acts of disobedience and it will become easier for you to lead them towards acts of obedience [and worship].
122. Compel your souls to abandon bad habits and you will overcome them; fight against your vain desires and you will gain control over them.
123. Perfection of righteousness is in struggling against the [carnal] soul.
124. The guidance of the soul is in opposing it.
125. The misguidance of the soul is in obedience to it.
126. The corruption of the soul is [caused by] vain desire.
127. Your power over your soul is the best power and your authority over it is the best authority.
128. How can one who is not content with little have the ability to reform himself?!
129. Being preoccupied with one's soul is enough to keep a person distracted from the people.
130. At the time when you are most confident in your soul be equally cautious (or fearful) of its deception.
131. Be the guardian of your soul, and do with your possessions that which you would like others to do with it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

132. Hold yourself to account and struggle against your evil nature, and beware of blaming your sins on your Lord.
133. Be a preventer and a forbiddener for yourself [from evil], and a suppressor and a subjugator for your wealth (or outburst) during zeal (or anger).
134. The souls have certain evil natures [and characteristics] and wisdom forbids [one from] them.
135. There is no price for your souls except Paradise, so do not sell them for anything but it.
136. There is no expectation [of goodness] from the one who wrongs his own soul.
137. There is none on the face of this earth more honoured in the sight of Allah, the Glorified, than the soul that is obedient to His commands.
138. One who considers himself to be more [important or powerful than others] becomes less.
139. One who humbles himself is honoured.
140. One who reforms his soul gains mastery over it.
141. One who neglects his soul destroys it.
142. One who honours his [carnal] soul is abased by it.
143. Whoever trusts his [carnal] soul is betrayed by it.
144. Whoever neglects his soul incurs loss.
145. One who knows himself divests himself [of all worldly desires].
146. Whoever obeys his soul kills it.
147. Whoever disobeys his soul has awarded it.
148. One who is ignorant of his soul neglects it.
149. Whoever considers himself to be great is humiliated.
150. Whoever protects his soul [from evil] is revered.
151. Whoever controls his [carnal] soul, his affair [and status] is elevated.
152. Whoever is controlled by his [carnal] soul, his status is lowered.
153. Whoever loathes his [carnal] soul is loved by Allah.
154. Whoever abases his [carnal] soul is honoured by Allah.
155. Whoever knows himself knows his Lord.
156. Whoever knows himself, his matter becomes sublime.
157. One who deceives himself cannot [sincerely] advise others.
158. One who governs [and trains] his soul has [truly] comprehended [the art of] administration.
159. Whoever takes care of his soul with vigilance, remains safe.
160. One who fears for his soul does not oppress others.
161. Whoever wrongs his [own] soul, no goodness is expected from him.
162. Whoever protects himself from asking others becomes exalted.
163. One whose soul is noble, his affection [and compassion] increases.
164. One who does not govern [and train] his own soul, destroys it.
165. Whoever is displeased with himself pleases his Lord.
166. Whoever is pleased with himself angers his Lord.
167. Whoever is able to gain control over his [carnal] self has attained the highest degree of strength.
168. Whoever struggles with his soul in order to reform it, becomes felicitous.
169. Whoever neglects his soul [as it indulges] in its pleasures becomes wretched and distanced [from the mercy of Allah].
170. One who does not struggle against his [carnal] soul in his young age does not become noble in his old age.
171. Whoever continually disciplines his soul derives [great] benefit.
172. Whoever is pleased with himself, many are angry with him.
173. Whoever indulges his soul in that which it loves, its wretchedness in that which it does not love gets prolonged.
174. Whoever preoccupies himself with that which is not necessary, lets the matters that are obligatory slip by.
175. Whoever holds himself accountable preserves his standing and the outcomes of his affair are praised.
176. Whoever neglects his soul corrupts his affair.
177. Whoever commands you to reform yourself is most deserving of your obedience.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

178. Whoever scrutinizes himself remains safe from the scrutiny of others.
179. Whoever oppresses himself is more oppressive to others.
180. Whoever is great in his own eyes is low in the sight of Allah.
181. One who is ignorant about himself is more ignorant about others.
182. Whoever is miserly with himself is more miserly with others.
183. One whose soul is honourable endeavours to purify it from the lowliness of worldly pursuits.
184. One who knows the value of his soul does not abase it with transient things.
185. Whoever troubles himself with that which does not benefit him gets caught in that which harms him.
186. One whose soul is content is assisted by it to become pure and remain chaste.
187. One whose soul is noble finds it easy to give generously and help others.
188. One who considers his soul to be honourable does not abase it by sinning.
189. One whose soul is vigilant and careful has protectors from Allah watching over him.
190. One who knows himself understands others better.
191. One who considers his soul to be honourable, his [lustful] desires become insignificant to him.
192. One who is lenient with his soul in that which he loves is troubled by it in that which he hates.
193. Whoever accuses himself has indeed overpowered Satan.
194. Whoever opposes his [carnal] soul has indeed defeated Satan.
195. Whoever obeys his soul in its lustful desires has indeed helped to destroy it.
196. Whoever is pleased with himself, his flaws become known.
197. Whoever reprimands his soul for [its] faults, it is deterred from many of the sins.
198. One who has in his soul a restrainer [from evil], has a protector over him from Allah.
199. Whoever knows himself has indeed attained the highest goal of every cognizance and knowledge.
200. One who does not discipline [and purify] his soul, will not benefit from the intellect.
201. Whoever does not benefit from his [own] soul, people do not benefit from him.
202. One who does not humble himself in his own eyes will not be elevated in the sight of others.
203. One who does not reform himself cannot reform others.
204. One whom Allah does not help [to fight] against his [carnal] soul will not benefit from the advice of the adviser.
205. One who leaves his [carnal] soul free [to do as it wills] will be taken by it to the paths of darkness [and evil].
206. Whoever deals leniently with [and flatters] his soul, it makes him rush towards forbidden sins.
207. Whoever does not set right his soul by reforming it, his malady becomes worse and curing it becomes impossible, and he will not find any physician [who can treat it].
208. One whose grief over his soul is prolonged in this world, Allah will give him delight on the Day of Resurrection and put him in the Eternal Abode [in Paradise].
209. Whoever preoccupies himself with other than his [own] soul falters in the darkness and becomes entangled in [a web of] destruction.
210. One who does not know himself is distanced from the path of salvation and stumbles in misguidance and ignorance.
211. One who advises [and admonishes] himself is worthy of giving advice to others.
212. One who deceives himself is more deceitful with others.
213. One whose soul is honourable, his dissension and disagreement [with the people] is reduced.
214. Whoever blames his soul, reforms it.
215. Whoever praises his soul, slays it.
216. One whose soul is honourable, this world becomes insignificant in his eyes.
217. Whoever sells his soul for other than the bliss of Paradise has indeed oppressed it.
218. One who does not discipline his soul is disgraced by [its] bad habits.
219. One who thinks good of his [own] soul has indeed done more harm
220. Being obedient [to Allah] is from the nobility of the soul.
221. Being obedient [to Allah] is from the God-wariness of the soul.
222. Hastening towards obedience [of Allah] is a merit of the soul.
223. Being satisfied at all times is a sign of an honourable soul.
224. None abases his [carnal] soul but the intelligent one.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

225. None considers himself to be imperfect [and disparages his carnal soul] but the perfect one.
226. One who sincerely advises others does not deceive himself.
227. How blind is the covetous soul to the terrible [and painful] end [it will face]!
228. Mankind, what has made you pleased with the destruction of your soul? Is there no cure from your ailment and no awakening from your slumber?! Do you not feel compassion for yourself as you have mercy on others?
229. No servant considers his soul to be honourable but that the world becomes lowly [and insignificant] in his eyes.
230. Cognizance of the self is the most beneficial of all [types of] knowledge.
231. Your [carnal] soul is the closest of all your enemies.
232. Purify your soul of every lowly trait even if it drives you towards the things that you desire.
233. Introspection turns one's attention to self-reformation.
234. One who is successful in knowing himself has achieved the greatest success.
235. Purify your souls from the filth of [forbidden] pleasures and the evil consequences of lustful desires.
236. Your [carnal] soul is a hostile enemy and an aggressive adversary, if you are unmindful of it, it will kill you.
237. Lower yourself from your [rightful] position and people will raise you higher than your rightful position.
238. The souls of the virtuous are averse to the souls of the wicked.
239. Purify your soul from every vileness and make an effort to perform every noble deed, you will become free from sins and will achieve noble qualities.
240. The souls of the virtuous are repulsed by the actions of the wicked.
241. The one who is pleased with himself and relies on that which his soul has made decorous for him, is destroyed.
242. The ardent desire of the soul for [forbidden] pleasures misguides and destroys.
243. Maintain your self-respect by keeping away from jokes, funny narrations and useless speech.
244. Safeguard yourself from the fire whose fuel is men and stones by advancing towards obedience to Allah, eschewing His disobedience and seeking His pleasure.
245. Do not sanction for yourself that [action] which you would disapprove of from others.
246. Do not permit yourself to engage in any evil speech or action.
247. Do not have fear of injustice from your Lord but fear the injustice of yourselves.
248. Do not be lenient with your [carnal] soul when it entices you.
249. Do not defy your soul when it guides you to the right path.
250. Do not let your soul be devoid of a thought that increases your wisdom and a lesson that safeguards you [from sin].
251. Never seek the obedience of others while your [own] soul refuses to obey you.
252. Do not be ignorant of yourself for indeed the one who is ignorant about himself is ignorant about everything.
253. Do not abandon struggle in reforming yourself, for indeed nothing but diligence will assist you [to achieve this].
254. Never declare war against Allah for there is no power that can protect you from His wrath and you can never be free from need for His mercy.
255. Do not permit yourself to submit to vain desires or to prefer the pleasures of this world such that your faith gets corrupted and cannot be reformed and your soul loses and does not gain.
256. Do not surrender yourself to the deception of covetousness and do not respond to the call of greed, for indeed these two [traits] reap wretchedness and disgrace.
257. One who cannot control his [carnal] soul is not safe from [the wrath and punishment of] Allah.
258. A person has no enemy worse than his [own carnal] soul.
259. The soul does not become devoid of hope until it comes upon death.
260. There is none stronger than he who overpowers his soul thereby gaining mastery over it.
261. There is no one more powerless than he who neglects his soul thereby destroying it.
262. It behoves the one who knows himself to espouse contentment and chastity.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

263. It behoves the one who knows the honour [and value] of his soul to purify it from the lowliness of this world.
264. It behoves the one who knows himself not to separate [himself] from sadness and caution.
265. It behoves a man to guard his soul, watch over his heart and protect
266. his tongue.
267. It behoves the one who wants to reform himself and protect his religion to avoid mingling with people who seek [the wealth and pleasures of] this world.
268. It behoves the one who knows himself not to be separated from caution and regret out of fear of falling into error.
269. How befitting it is for a person to have a fixed time, when he is not distracted by anything, in which he holds his soul to account and looks at what he has earned for and against it in its night-time and daytime.
270. None is enviable except the one whose endeavour is [to purify] his soul and who does not neglect to regularly hold it to account, demand answers from it and struggle against it.
271. A person's rebuking [and finding fault with] his own soul is evidence of the soundness of his intellect and the symbol of his abundant merit.
272. Control the passion of your soul, the intensity of your rage, the power of your hand and the sharpness of your tongue, and guard against all these by delaying the initiation of any action and refraining from using force until your rage subsides and you recover your senses.
273. 1285
274. Take control over your vain desires and the distress of your soul, for indeed the distress of the soul lies in acting equitably in [both] the things which it loves and [in those which it] hates.
275. The one who keeps his soul steadfast against the temptations of worldly pleasures is a master [over it] and the one who neglects it is destroyed.
276. Self-restraint during times of anger saves one from situations that lead to harm.
277. Self-restraint during desire and fear is from the most excellent etiquette.
278. Every person who relies on himself [instead of Allah] is thrown [into destruction].
279. Whoever is deceived by his soul is delivered by it to places of destruction.

Notes

1. Meaning give charity from it during your lifetime and do not leave this for others to do after your death.
2. Or: One who cannot control his [carnal] soul does not submit to Allah.

663. GIVING AND WITHHOLDING CHARITY

1. Beware of withholding [charity], for indeed you are [only] a treasurer for someone else in that which you withhold from what is in excess of your daily requirement.
2. If you spend your wealth for the sake of Allah, then [know that] indeed Allah is quick in recompense.
3. When you are blessed with sustenance then give charity.
4. When you are blessed with sustenance then give generously.
5. Your garments are more lasting for you when worn by others rather than yourself.
6. A dirham that benefits [others] is better than a dinar that throws one into ruin.
7. The dirham of a poor man is purer in the sight of Allah than the dinar of the rich.
8. Many a thing that is little grows and develops much more than that which is plenty.
9. Little that belongs to you is better than plenty that belongs to others.
10. Nobody gains anything from his worldly life except that which he spends on others.
11. One who gives with a short arm is given with a long arm.
12. Verily you are more in need of giving charity from what you have earned than acquiring what you accumulate.

Notes

1. The dirham is a silver coin and the dinar is a gold coin (which is typically valued as ten times as much as the dirham).

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Sayyid Raḍi (r) has explained the meaning of this aphorism thus: it means the human being gets much reward for the little charity that he gives. For the entire explanation refer to the commentary of Nahj al-Balāgha, Hikma no. 232

664. HYPOCRISY

1. Beware of hypocrisy, for indeed the two-faced person is not eminent in the sight of Allah.
2. Hypocrisy is the brother of polytheism.
3. Hypocrisy is a disgraceful character.
4. Hypocrisy is the twin of disbelief.
5. Hypocrisy corrupts [one's] faith.
6. Hypocrisy is from the andirons of ignominy.
7. Hypocrisy is founded on falsehood.
8. How reprehensible it is for a human being to have a sick interior and a beautiful exterior.

665. THE HYPOCRITE

1. A hypocrite's tongue pleases but his heart causes harm.
2. A hypocrite's words are beautiful but his actions are a painful malady.
3. The hypocrite is a shameless, foolish, wretched sycophant.
4. The hypocrite flatters himself but maligns others.
5. The most obvious of hypocrite among the people is one who enjoins obedience [to Allah] but does not act upon it himself, and forbids sin but does not refrain from it himself.
6. Be cautious of the hypocrites for indeed they are misguided and misguide others, they have erred and make others err, their hearts are diseased while their outward appearance looks pure.
7. The hypocrite is sceptical [and puts others in doubt].
8. The hypocrite is sly, harmful and suspicious.
9. I fear for you from every eloquent speaker who is a hypocrite at heart, he says what you know [to be good] but does what you dislike [and know to be bad].
10. He ('a) described the hypocrites thus: they are jealous of [those in] comfort, intensify [the] distress [of the distressed] and destroy hopes [of the hopeful]. Their fallen victims are lying on every path, they have means to approach every heart and they have false tears for every [occasion of] grief.
11. It is the habit of hypocrites to change their character [depending on their circumstances].
12. He ('a) said about the hypocrites: They have indeed prepared for every truth a falsehood, and for every straight thing something crooked, and for every living thing a killer, and for every [closed] door a key, and for every night a lamp.
13. Every hypocrite is a sceptic [who puts doubts in the minds of the people].
14. One whose hypocrisy abounds, his sincerity will not be recognized.
15. How repulsive is it for a human being to agree externally while being hypocritical internally.
16. How repulsive it is for a human being to be two-faced.
17. The example of the hypocrite is that of a colocynth, its leaves are green but its taste is bitter.
18. The hypocrisy of a person stems from the inferiority [and humiliation] he finds within himself.
19. About the hypocrites [he ('a) said]: They are the congregation of Satan and the dwellers of hellfire. These are the party of Satan, and indeed it is the party of Satan who are the losers.
20. They walk stealthily and tread slowly, hiding behind trees. Their words are [like] a cure but their actions are incurable diseases. They exchange praise [with each other] and come near each other through (or are careful of) reward. They obtain what they covet by means of despair. When they talk they create doubts, they dissemble in their speech and when they speak they delude (or distort).
21. The [person who is] most severe in his hypocrisy is one who enjoins obedience but does not act upon it himself, and forbids sin but does not refrain from it himself.

666. DEFICIENCY

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. It suffices as a deficiency for a man to consider himself as great.

667. THE DEFICIENT

1. The deficient one is he whose faults are hidden from him.

668. REVENGE

1. Rushing to take revenge is from the traits of the wicked.
2. The most revolting act of a powerful person is revenge.
3. Evil retribution [and revenge] is from the vileness of victory.
4. One who punishes the guilty [instead of forgiving him], his merit [and kindness] gets corrupted.
5. Whoever takes revenge on the wrongdoer nullifies his merit in this world and loses the reward of the Hereafter.
6. Being hasty in taking revenge is from the traits of the wicked.

669. DIVINE WRATH

1. How is it that you are not kept awake by the [fear of] Allah's punishments that befall you by night while you lie in the way of Allah's wrath because of your disobedience to Him?!
2. How close is the punishment of Allah to the oppressors (or the unjust) and wrongdoers!

670. THE DEFAULTERS, THE INIQUITOUS AND THE TRANSGRESSORS

1. Indeed Allah has commanded me to fight against those who revolt and break pledges and create strife on the earth. As for the defaulters, I have fought them and as for the iniquitous, I have struggled against them and as for the transgressors, I have vanquished them. As for the Satan of the pit, I have dealt with him with an overpowering scream, until I heard the restless beating of his heart and the trembling of his chest.

671. MARRIAGES

1. One who marries many women is engulfed by embarrassments.

672. TALE-BEARING

1. Beware of talebearing, for indeed it plants [the seed of] rancour and distances one from Allah and the people.
2. The worst [type of] truthful speech is gossip.
3. Talebearing is the characteristic of a traitor.
4. Talebearing is an offense [and a sin] that cannot be forgotten.
5. The worst trait is talebearing.
6. One who seeks to slander [others] by talebearing is fought by the near one and hated by the one who is far [from him].
7. One who narrates to you [about others] narrates [to others] about you.
8. Do not be quick in accepting the words of a talebearer, even if he resembles the good advisers, for indeed the slanderer oppresses the one whom he slanders [about] and deceives the one whom he slanders to.
9. Be neither scandalmongers nor revealers of others' secrets.
10. Trustworthiness and talebearing do not go together.
11. Belie slander and talebearing, whether it is false or true.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

12. The slanderer is a liar to the one whom he spreads his slander and an oppressor to the one whom he slanders about.

673. PEOPLE

1. People are like writings on a scroll [of parchment], whenever part of it is rolled up, another part of it is unrolled.
2. People are children of this world, and a child is naturally inclined to love its mother.
3. People are divided into two types of seekers, and each seeker is also sought after; so whoever seeks this world is sought after by death until it takes him out from it, and whoever seeks the Hereafter is sought after by this world, until he gets his sustenance from it in full.
4. People are of three types: the godly scholar, the student who is on the path of salvation and the uncultivated rabble who run after every caller, neither seeking light from the effulgence of knowledge nor taking recourse to any strong support.
5. People are like trees, their drink is one but their fruits are different.
6. People are made deficient and flawed, except those whom Allah, the Glorified, protects. The questioner among them aims to embarrass and confuse while the answerer creates trouble. It is not long until the one who has the best views among them is turned away from his good opinion by pleasure or displeasure, and at any moment the most strong-willed among them will get affected by a single glance or transformed by a single expression.
6. The people who work in this world are of two types: one works in this world for this world; his world has indeed distracted him from his Hereafter. He fears poverty for those whom he will leave behind but feels safe from it himself; so he spends his entire life for the benefit of others. The other one works in this world for that which is to come after it, so that which is [allotted] for him comes to him without [extra] work. Thus he acquires both the shares together and gains possession of both the abodes collectively.
7. Out of fear of humiliation, people are hastening [towards] humiliation.
8. The best of people are those who benefit others the most.
9. The most felicitous person is the intelligent believer.
10. The most excellent person is the generous one who possesses certitude.
11. The best people in fulfilling the rights of others are the best in their [following of] Islam.
12. The loftiest of people is the one who humbles himself.
13. The strongest person is one who gains an upper hand over his [carnal] soul.
14. The strongest person is one who overpowers his vain desires.
15. The most sagacious person is one who rejects [the pleasures of] his worldly life.
16. The person who makes the most profit is one who buys the Hereafter with this world.
17. The person who suffers the greatest loss is one who settles for this world in exchange for the Hereafter.
18. The best person is one whose own faults distract him from the faults of others.
19. The people who are most felicitous are those who are least interested in this world.
20. The best person is one whose soul is pure and who is indifferent towards this world despite being wealthy.
21. The most enviable person is the one who rushes to perform good deeds.
22. Of all the people, the most deserving of compassion are: the scholar upon whom an ignorant person passes judgment, the noble person who is dominated by a vile person and the virtuous person who is under the command of a vicious person.
23. The best people in this world are the generous ones, and in the Hereafter, the God-wary.
24. The person in the worst condition is one whose material wealth is cut off but his habit [of spending] remains.
25. The person who has the weariest heart is one whose endeavour is great and whose magnanimity is abundant, yet his [financial ability and] resources are minimal.
26. The person living in the most straitened circumstances is one whose desire is much, whose endeavour is great and whose provisions are plenty but his support is less.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

27. The best person is one who resists his vain desires and better than him is he who rejects [the pleasures of] his worldly life.
28. The most wretched person is one who is overcome by his vain desire so his worldly life gains mastery over him and he corrupts his Hereafter.
29. Verily people are only either scholars or seekers of knowledge, all others are rabble.
30. Indeed the elite among the people are only those who have admirable intellects, honourable ambitions and are possessors of nobility.
31. Let the person who enjoys your favour the most be he who is most protective of the weak and acts most in accordance with the truth.
32. The best person is he who shows forbearance if he is angered, forgives if he is oppressed, and does good [in return] if is wronged.
33. The best person is one who benefits the people.
34. The best person is he who bears the responsibility of providing for the people.
35. The best of people are the most pious amongst them and the worst of them are most immoral amongst them.
36. The best person is one who shows gratitude when he is given, remains patient when he is tested [with tribulations], and forgives when he is wronged.
37. The best person is one who removes greed from his heart and resists his vain desires in obedience to his Lord.
38. The best person is one who purifies his soul from lustful desires, quells his anger and pleases his Lord.
39. The best person is one who is generous and thankful in times of prosperity.
40. The best person is one who is altruistic and patient in times of hardship.
41. The best person is one whose soul is uninterested in worldly pleasures, whose desire is less, whose lust is dead, whose faith is pure and whose certitude is true.
42. The entry of people into [discussion about] a thing is the prelude to its [coming into] existence.
43. The worst person is one who deceives others.
44. The worst person is one who oppresses others.
45. The worst person is one who neither accepts excuses nor pardons offences.
46. The worst person is one who considers himself to be the best of them.
47. The worst person is one who does not care if people see him doing evil.
48. The worst person is one who does not give thanks for blessings and does not respect the inviolable boundaries [of others].
49. The worst person is one who slanders his brothers and forgets the favours [done to him by others].
50. The worst person is one from whom good is not expected and from whose evil people do not feel secure.
51. The worst person is one who neither keeps the trust [that has been placed in his care] nor does he avoid treachery.
52. The worst person is one who neither forgives mistakes nor covers up the faults [of others].
53. The worst person is one who assists [the oppressor] against the oppressed.
54. The worst person is he who puts on the armour of vileness and helps the unjust.
55. The worst person is one who looks for the faults of others while turning a blind eye to his own faults.
56. The worst person is one who fears the people with regards to [fulfilling the commandments of] his Lord but does not fear his Lord with regards to the people.
57. The worst person is one who hopes for calamities to befall on others.
58. The worst person is one who does not trust anyone because of his suspicion and who is not trusted by anyone because of his evil actions.
59. The worst person is one whom people are cautious about out of fear of his evil.
60. The worst person is one who repays good with evil while the best of people is one who repays evil with good.
61. The worst person is he who has lengthy aspirations and does evil deeds.
62. One who knows [the true nature of] the people, isolates himself.
63. One who wishes ill for the people will not remain safe from affliction.
64. Whoever knows the [true nature of the] people does not rely on them.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

65. Whoever is ignorant about people has confidence in them.
66. Whoever deals with the people in a beautiful manner, they respond to him in a similar fashion.
67. The best person is one who deals most gently with others and the most sagacious of them is one who is most persevering on the truth.
68. The person who has the most hope of reformation is one who hastens to change himself when he learns of his faults.
69. The person who is most concerned about you is the one who is most helpful to you in improving [and reforming] yourself and is most sincere in advising you with regards to your religion.
70. Verily the best person in the sight of Allah is one who enlivens his mind, kills off his lust and exerts himself for the betterment of his Hereafter.
71. People are of two types: the seeker who does not find [what he is looking for] and the finder who is not satisfied [with what he has found].
72. People are of two types: the generous one who does not possess [anything to bestow] and the one who possesses [plenty] but does not help others [with it].
73. People are only [one of] of two types: the follower of [divine] law or the innovator of an innovation.
74. It behoves the one who knows the [true nature of] people to be uninterested in that which they possess.
75. People are fine as long as they are dissimilar from one another.
76. The best-off people in the Hereafter are the poorest of them in this world.
77. The most eminent person is one who is humble despite his high standing and who shows humility despite his might.

674. SLEEP

1. Sleep is a relief from pain and its counterpart is death.
2. What a bad rival sleep is! It wastes the short life [a person has] and causes one to lose a lot of reward.
3. One who sleeps a lot at night loses the [opportunity to perform the] deeds that he cannot make up for during the daytime.
4. What a rescinder sleep is for the resolutions of the day!
5. One who is deep in sleep is belied by his dreams.
6. Woe to the sleeper, how great is his loss! His actions fall short and his reward is little.

675. DEPUTYSHIP

1. When you are appointed as a deputy, then be resolute [in fulfilling your obligation].

676. OBTAINMENT

1. Whoever obtains [great wealth or power] becomes overbearing.

677. INTENTION

1. Righteous intention is one of the two actions.
2. The best of provisions is having good inner consciences.
3. The closest intentions to success are those that are nearest to righteousness.
4. The most effective thing in making mercy flow forth [and surround you] is having mercy in your heart for all the people.
5. Verily Allah, the Glorified, knows the hidden intention of every concealer, the speech of every speaker and the action of every doer.
6. Verily making intentions sincere and free from corruption is more difficult for the doers [of good deeds] than a prolonged, difficult struggle.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Verily Allah, the Glorified, likes a person's intention towards the people to be good just as He likes his intention in His obedience to be strong, not shaky.
8. Actions are the fruits of intentions.
9. Intention is the basis of action.
10. Having a good intention brings about reward.
11. When the intention gets corrupted, affliction befalls.
12. Through good intentions, what is sought is attained.
13. The servant attains nearness to Allah through the sincerity of his intention.
14. Making intentions sincere and free from corruption is more difficult for the doers [of good deeds] than a long, hard struggle.
15. Having good aims [and intentions] is an indication of legitimate birth.
16. Having a good intention is a means of attaining one's aspiration.
17. Good intention is the beauty of the innermost consciences.
18. Good intention is from the soundness of [one's] conscience.
19. Many an intention is more beneficial than action.
20. Evil intention is a hidden malady.
21. The sincerity of [one's] intention is to the extent of the strength of [his] faith.
22. When the intention becomes corrupt, blessings are taken away.
23. In sincerity of intentions lies the success of [all] matters.
24. If the intentions became sincere, the actions would become pure.
25. Whoever has an evil intention is deprived of his aspiration.
26. Whoever makes his intention sincere is purified from vileness.
27. One whose intention is good, his reward is increased, his life becomes good and affection for him becomes inevitable.
28. One whose intention is good is assisted with God-given success.
29. A person's attainment of all that he wishes for, such as a good life, the security of his flock and an increase in wealth, is through the goodness of his intention and excellence of his character.
30. He who has no intention has no action.
31. He who has no knowledge has no intention.
32. One whose resolve [and intention] is evil, his death is a cause of happiness.

Notes

1. Meaning it is considered a good action in and of itself, aside from the actual good deed.

678. RELIANCE ON ALLAH

1. Whoever relies upon Allah becomes free from need.
2. Whoever relies upon Allah puts his trust in Him.
3. Whoever relies upon Allah has preserved his certitude.
4. Whoever is certain that what Allah has decreed for him will never escape him, his heart becomes relaxed.
5. Many a person who relies on something [or someone] gets ashamed.

679. ATTAINMENT

1. Attainment [of one's goal] is solace.

680. PAIN

1. Whoever hides a pain that has afflicted him for three days and complains of it [only] to Allah, the Glorified, then Allah will be the one who restores his good health.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

681. AFFECTION AND FRIENDSHIP

1. Honour your friendship and keep your promise.
2. Affection is an auspicious blessing.
3. When you love [something or someone] then do not be excessive [in your love].
4. When friendship gets established then [mutual] co-operation and support becomes necessary.
5. Through affection comes love.
6. The best person in granting favours is the one who begins by [showing] friendship.
7. The quickest friendships to get cut off are the friendships of wicked people.
8. Verily friendship is expressed by the tongue whereas love is expressed by the gaze (or the eyes).
9. Friendship is kinship.
10. Friendship is affinity.
11. Friendship is the closest relationship.
12. Friendship is the closest kinship.
13. Friendship is an acquired affinity.
14. Being friendly with people is the cornerstone of intelligence.
15. Friendship for the sake of Allah is the best relationship.
16. Friendship for the sake of Allah is stronger than the bond of blood-relationship.
17. By [showing] affection love is strengthened.
18. Three things bring about love: religion, humility and generosity.
19. Three things bring about love: good character, good companionship and humility.
20. The best choice is making friends with the virtuous.
21. The cornerstone of intelligence is being friendly with the people.
22. Many a [seemingly] friendly person is only feigning [friendship].
23. Ask the hearts about [your] affections, for indeed they are witnesses that do not accept bribes.
24. Soundness of friendship is part of honouring one's promise.
25. In times of hardship and adversity, the value of [one's] friendship becomes apparent.
26. Every friendship [and affection] that is based on [anything] other than seeking proximity to Allah is misguidance, and relying on it is impossible.
27. Be an upholder of friendship even if you do not find any custodian [for it].
28. One whose friendship is sincere, his audacity is tolerated.
29. Whoever befriends a silly person proclaims his own silliness.
30. One who befriends you for a [specific] objective, turns his back [on you] once it is accomplished.
31. Nothing brings about love like generosity, companionship and good character.
32. One who does not give good advice is not sincere in his friendship.
33. The friendship of the religious ones does not get severed quickly and is ever firm and lasting.
34. The friendship of a fool is like a tree of fire, part of it consumes [its] other parts.
35. The friendship of a fool vanishes the way a mirage vanishes and is dispersed the way mist gets dispersed.
36. The friendship of ignorant people constantly changes [with changes in circumstances] and quickly transforms [into enmity].
37. The friendship of lay people parts like the parting of clouds, and disappears like the mirage disappears.
38. The friendship of worldly people is cut off when its [worldly] motives are severed.
39. The friendship of the people who care for the Hereafter lasts as long as its motive [of pleasing Allah] lasts.
40. Have affection for those whom you befriend [only] for the sake of Allah and hate those whom you dislike [only] for the sake of Allah, the Glorified.
41. Do not grant your friendship to one who has no loyalty.
42. Do not be keen in befriending a person whose true nature you have not known.
43. Do not befriend the disbeliever and do not accompany the ignorant.
44. Do not rely on the friendship of the one who does not fulfil his promise.
45. Never extend your friendship when you do not find a [suitable] place for it.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

46. No one shows compassion like the sincere friend.
47. No one befriends the wicked except those who are like them.
48. The friendship of one who has no faith is not something to be envious about.
49. The loyal friend does not turn away from his friendship even if he is far away.
50. Friendship that lacks equity does not last.
51. It is befitting for the person who values the friendship of a fool to be humiliated.
52. The most beneficial of treasures is the love of the hearts.
53. Friendship is one of two [close] relationships.
54. Friendship for the sake of Allah is the more perfect of the two kinships.
55. Friendship is the [mutual] empathy of the hearts and the harmony of the souls.
56. The closest proximity is the affection of the hearts.
57. The farthest remoteness is the aloofness of the hearts.
58. Beware of loving the enemies of Allah or having sincere affection for other than the friends of Allah, for indeed whoever loves a group of people is resurrected with them.
59. Seek the love of Allah, the Glorified, by desiring that which is with Him.
60. Endear yourself to the people by being uninterested in their possessions and you will be successful in gaining their love.
61. How can one in whose heart love for this world resides, claim to love Allah?!
62. Friendship does not become pure [and sincere] with one who is not well-mannered.

Notes

1. Or [in another reading]: The wicked do not befriend anyone except those who are like them.

682. PIETY

1. Piety reforms the faith, protects the soul and adorns magnanimity.
2. Restraining oneself from the forbidden [actions] is from the traits of the intelligent and is the quality of the honourable.
3. Abandoning sins is better than seeking repentance [after sinning].
4. The most authoritative thing is piety.
5. The most beneficial thing is piety.
6. Piety is the best attire.
7. The pious person is one whose soul is pure and whose attributes are noble.
8. Piety is stopping when faced with doubt.
9. Be cautious of [your duty towards] Him just as He has warned you of Himself and fear Him with a fear that would prevent you from [doing] that which causes His wrath.
10. Beware of falling into doubts and being inclined towards lustful desires, for indeed these two lead you towards falling into the forbidden and committing many sins.
11. The best [and most virtuous] thing is piety.
12. The best piety is thinking positively [about others].
13. Keeping away from evil deeds is better than earning [reward through] good deeds.
14. The root of piety is keeping away from sins and refraining from the forbidden.
15. The best [form of] piety is keeping away from lustful desires.
16. He who divests himself of piety has corrupted his faith.
17. The most excellent attire is piety and the best provision is God-wariness.
18. The most pious of people is one who is most free from wants.
19. Verily the most beautiful characteristics are piety and chastity.
20. Piety is eschewal [of the forbidden].
21. Piety is a shield.
22. Piety is the most excellent attire.
23. Piety is the best companion.
24. Piety is nothing but the purification of oneself from sins.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

25. Piety is nothing but scrutinizing one's earnings [to ensure lawfulness] and abstaining from worldly pursuits.
26. Lack of contentment is the bane of piety.
27. Through piety there is purification from lowly traits.
28. Through true piety, religion is protected.
29. It is through piety that a believer is purified.
30. The fruit of piety is the uprightness of one's soul and faith.
31. The fruit of being pious is purity [from sins].
32. The indication of a man's piety is his purity [from sins].
33. The proof of good piety is the soul's refrainment from the disgrace of avarice.
34. May Allah have mercy upon the person who refrains from the forbidden, bears the liabilities [of others] and vies in hastening towards the abundant prizes [of the Hereafter].
35. The cornerstone of piety is lowering one's gaze.
36. The cause of integrity of faith is piety.
37. The cause of righteousness of the soul is piety.
38. Two things cannot be matched in weight by any [other] action: virtuous piety and kindness towards the believers.
39. Espouse piety, for it is indeed the best protection.
40. You must espouse piety, for indeed it is a helper of the faith and a trait of the sincere ones.
41. Espouse piety and beware of the deception of avarice, for indeed it is a pasture without herbage.
42. During the presence of lustful desires and pleasures, the piety of the God-wary becomes evident.
43. Piety has been paired with God-wariness.
44. How can one who is possessed by avarice possess piety?
45. Let your piety be true, your striving for the right be intense and your intention be sincere in the trust [you take] and the vow [you make].
46. One who is not reformed by piety is corrupted by avarice.
47. One who is truly pious keeps away from the forbidden actions.
48. Whoever shuns lustful desires has safeguarded his soul.
49. One who lacks piety, his heart is dead.
50. One whose piety increases, his sins decrease.
51. One who adopts piety, his worship becomes good.
52. Whoever divests himself of piety puts on the attire of disgrace.
53. One of the prerequisites of piety is refraining from sins.
54. It is from the most excellent piety that you not do in private what you would be embarrassed to do in public.
55. Eschewing forbidden actions is from the most excellent piety.
56. Nothing reforms the faith like piety.
57. The basis of piety is refraining from the forbidden [actions].
58. With piety, actions bear fruit.
59. Piety is indeed a good companion and avarice is certainly an evil associate.
60. The piety of a man is to the extent of his religiosity.
61. Be pious and you will become pure.
62. The piety that saves is better than the avarice that ruins.
63. The piety that dignifies is better than the avarice that humiliates.
64. The piety of a person frees him from every vileness.
65. The piety of a believer is manifested in his action.
66. The piety of a hypocrite is not manifested but on his tongue.
67. There is no piety like overcoming [one's] lust.
68. There is no purity like piety.
69. There is no piety like eschewing sins.
70. Nothing reforms faith like piety.
71. Piety and avarice do not go together.
72. There is no stronghold more protective than piety.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

73. There is no safeguard for the one who has no piety.
74. There is no piety more beneficial than eschewing the forbidden.
75. There is no piety more beneficial than abandoning the forbidden and eschewing sins.
76. There is no action better than [practicing] piety.
77. It pleases me for a person to be righteously pious, free from avarice, abundant in kindness and lacking in [making others feel a sense of] obligation.
78. One of the prerequisites of piety is refraining from sins.
79. Piety is the distinguishing mark of the God-wary.
80. Piety is a shield against evil deeds.
81. Piety is the lamp of success.
82. Piety is an exalter.
83. Piety is the fruit of chastity.
84. Piety is a trait of the learned scholar.
85. Piety is the basis of God-wariness.
86. Piety restrains one from committing acts that are forbidden.
87. Piety is better than the disgrace of avarice.
88. Verily if you adopt piety, you will become free from the filth of evil deeds.

683. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

1. Verily supporting [one's] companions financially is a sign of noble descent.
2. Giving financial support [to a believer] is the best of actions.
3. Nothing preserves brotherhood like financial support [in times of need].

684. TATTLETALE

1. Whoever believes [the words of] a tattletale spoils his friendship.

685. GETTING CONNECTED TO ALLAH

1. You will never get connected to the Creator until you sever your ties with the creation.
2. Connecting to Allah is in severing ties with the people.

686. ESTABLISHING TIES AND RELATIONS

1. Establish ties [with each other] and come to agreements, and beware of severing ties and forsaking one another.
2. Establish ties with the one who cuts you off, give the one who asks you, and initiate in giving to the one who does not ask from you.
3. The one who establishes ties with you while he has nothing is better than the one who shuns you while he has plenty.
4. Whoever establishes ties with you through the sanctity of Islam has associated [with you] through the firmest means.
5. Being connected [and keeping ties] with the people of excellence leads to loftiness.
6. Establish ties with the one whom you keep relations with for the sake of Allah, and sever ties with the one whom you disassociate with for the sake of Allah, the Glorified.
7. The ties established [with you] by a pauper is better than the shunning of the affluent.
8. The one who consociates with the people is he who establishes ties with the one who cuts him off.
9. Never let your brother be stronger in severing ties with you than you are in establishing ties with him.

687. HUMILITY

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

1. Humility is the more superior of the two honours.
2. Humility in spite of [having a] high rank is like forgiveness in spite of [possessing the] power [to punish].
3. Humility is the cornerstone of intelligence and pride is the cornerstone of ignorance.
4. Be humble and you will be elevated.
5. The greatest of people in loftiness is one who humbles himself.
6. The most honourable of attributes is humility, forbearance and affability.
7. Humility elevates, pride abases.
8. Humility is the fruit of knowledge.
9. Humility elevates the abased.
10. Humility is the symbol of nobility.
11. Humility spreads [one's] virtue.
12. Humility is the alms-tax of honour.
13. Humility is the most honourable eminence.
14. Humility is the ladder of honour.
15. Humility is one of the snares [for capturing] of honour.
16. Verily if you become humble, Allah will elevate you.
17. It is through humility that one gets elevated.
18. Through humility the loftiness [of a person] is measured.
19. Through increased humility, honour is perfected.
20. Humble yourself before Allah and He will elevate you.
21. The humility of a person elevates him.
22. The completeness of honour is [in] humility.
23. The humility of a noble person is the cause of his honour.
24. The fruit of humility is love.
25. The result of humility is honour.
26. Humility suffices as an honour.
27. Humility suffices as loftiness.
28. As you become humble, you become great.
29. One who has humility is elevated.
30. One who is humble is never bereft of honour.
31. Whoever has humility, Allah honours and elevates him.
32. None is humble except the lofty.
33. Nothing earns honour like humility.
34. Nobody shows humility but that Allah, the Exalted, increases his loftiness.
35. How good is the humility shown by the wealthy towards the poor in order to attain that which is with Allah, the Glorified, and how good is the pride of the poor in front of the wealthy out of [their] trust in Allah, the Glorified!
36. There is no honour like humility.
37. By being humble, matters are put in order.

Notes

1. Or: Through humility, loftiness is adorned.

688. HOMELAND

1. It is from the restriction of means to remain in one's homeland [and not travel].
2. Separation from one's homeland is one of the two separations.

689. ADMONITION

1. Take light from the flame of the preacher who practices what he preaches, accept advice from the adviser who is vigilant, and act upon what he teaches you.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

2. Indeed the most hearing ear is one that listens to admonition and heeds
3. The most beneficial of admonitions is that which deters [someone from sin].
4. The most effective admonition is taking a lesson from the place where the dead lay.
5. The most effective admonition is looking at the places where the dead lay, and taking a lesson from the outcome of one's forefathers and foremothers.
6. The most effective adviser for you is this world, if only you took a lesson from what it shows you of the changing circumstances and what it informs you of disunion and separation.
7. Verily there is a lesson and an admonition in everything for the people of wisdom and understanding.
8. Verily the most sincere of people is one who admonishes himself and is most submissive to his Lord.
9. Verily the admonition that is neither discarded by the ears nor matched in benefit is that which is not expressed by the speaking tongue, rather it is exhibited by the tongue of action.
10. Accepting admonition means taking a lesson [and putting into action].
11. Admonitions are the means of enlivening the hearts.
12. Sincere advice bears the fruit of affection.
13. Admonition is a curative advice.
14. Admonitions are a sanctuary for one who heeds them.
15. Admonitions are a remedy for the one who acts upon them.
16. The beneficial admonition is that which deters [from sin].
17. Admonitions are the sheen of the souls and the polish of the hearts.
18. Through admonitions heedlessness is dispelled.
19. Between you and the admonition there is a veil of heedlessness and negligence.
20. The fruit of admonition is awareness.
21. The best of admonitions is that which deters [from sin].
22. May Allah have mercy on the person who accepts admonition, is deterred [from sin] and benefits from the lessons [he has] learnt.
23. Many a commander [towards good] does not follow [his own] commands.
24. Many a preventer [of evil] does not prevent himself [from it].
25. Many an admonisher does not [follow his admonishment and] deter himself [from sin].
26. Hearing with the ear does not benefit when the heart is heedless.
27. In admonitions there is polishing of the hearts.
28. Comprehension [and acceptance] of admonitions invites one to caution, so take admonition from the examples [of the past], and take lesson from the [sudden] changes in circumstances, and take benefit from the Warners.
29. For the people who possess intellect, what they experience is sufficient as an admonition.
30. One who finds tranquillity in thinking positively about the [passing] days has not understood the admonitions of time.
31. Do not shun the one who admonishes you [to good].
32. Whoever admonishes you [to act righteously] has done you a favour.
33. Whoever does not take lesson from [what happens to] the people, Allah makes an example out of him for the people.
34. Whoever understands the admonitions of time will not be at ease with positive thoughts about his days.
35. Admonition is an excellent gift.
36. He ('a) said about the one whom he was rebuking: He is bold in his words but falls short in his actions. He rebukes others but flatters himself. He has been given respite by Allah along with the heedless ones. He leaves in the morning in the company of sinners without a [straight] path to follow or a leader to [act as a] guide, without any clear knowledge or strong faith. He fears death but does not fear loss [of opportunity to do good deeds for his Hereafter].
37. Never be one of those who do not benefit from admonition unless you give him a painful punishment, for indeed the intelligent one takes admonishment from discipline whereas beasts are not deterred except by beating.
38. people, how much admonition will you be given yet you decline it? How much have the preachers preached to you, the warners warned you, the preventers prevented you and the scholars conveyed

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

[the message] you! The Prophets and Messengers have guided you to the path of salvation, presented their proof and shown you the clear way. So hasten towards good deeds and take advantage of the time [you have in this world], for indeed today there is action without accounting and tomorrow there will be accounting without action, and the wrongdoers will soon know to what final place they will return.

39. He loves to be obeyed while he disobeys and to be given his full share while he does not give others their dues. He loves to be described as generous while he does not give [anything to the needy] and to seek from others what is due to him while not letting others ask for their rights from him.
40. He speaks of the world with the words of the abstemious yet acts in it with the actions of the desirous.
41. He manifests the traits of the virtuous yet secretly performs the actions of the wicked. He hates death because of his numerous sins yet does not abandon them in his lifetime. He expedites sins but delays repentance. He loves the righteous ones but does not follow their actions. He hates the sinful yet he is one of them. He says: 'Why should I act and become weary, instead I will sit and aspire.' He always hastens towards what perishes and leaves aside that which remains. He is incapable of being thankful for what he is given yet always seeks more in what remains. He guides others to the right but deceives himself. He forbids the people from that which he does not forbid himself from and enjoins them to perform that which he does not perform. He takes upon himself more responsibility from people than what is required yet he neglects from his own soul what is more important [and necessary]. He commands the people but does not follow the commandments [himself] and he warns them but does not heed the warnings. He hopes for the reward of an act which he has not performed and feels secure from the punishment of an act which is undoubtedly a sin. He attracts the attention of people through his religiousness yet he conceals within himself the opposite of what he displays. He knows the right that he has on others but does not recognize the right that others have on him. He fears for others more than [he fears about] his sins and hopes for himself more than [he deserves by] his actions. For big things he puts his hope in Allah but for small things he puts his hope in the people, so he gives the servant that which he does not give the Lord. He fears the servants with regards to [the commandments of] his Lord yet does not fear his Lord with regards to the servants.
42. The one who accepts admonition has indeed awoken.

690. GOD-GIVEN SUCCESS

1. God-given success is the more honourable of the two shares.
2. God-given success and God's abandonment each pulls the soul towards itself, so whichever [of the two] prevails, it enters its fold.
3. Verily when Allah, the Glorified, wishes good for a servant, He grants him success in spending his lifetime doing the best deeds and blesses him with the ability to quickly use his available time to perform acts of worship, before [the coming of] his death.
4. God-given success is [God's special attention and] favour.
5. God-given success is a mercy.
6. God-given success is [a means of] advancement [towards Allah].
7. God-given success (or kindness) is the key to sustenance.
8. God-given success is the leader towards righteousness.
9. God-given success is from the attractions [that pulls one] towards the Lord.
10. God-given success is the beginning of [many] blessings.
11. God-given success is a supporter of the intellect.
12. God-given success is the cornerstone of felicity.
13. God-given success is the fountainhead of prosperity.
14. God-given success is the favour [and special attention] of the Most Merciful.
15. God-given success is the best virtue.
16. Through God-given success felicity is achieved.
17. God-given success is the best leader.
18. God-given success is the best helper and good action is the best associate.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. There is no succour like God-given success.
20. There is no blessing greater than God-given success.
21. One who considers evil to be good and turns away from the words of the sincere adviser does not become successful.
22. Whoever is granted success does good [work].
23. One who is assisted by God-given success does good work.
24. One who is not assisted by God-given success does not turn towards the truth.
25. Taking [and acting upon] good advice is from the biggest success.
26. Part of the success of a freeman (or a person) is his earning wealth through legitimate means.
27. From the success of a man is putting his secret in the hands of one who conceals it and [placing] his goodness with one who spreads it [and makes it known to others].
28. We praise Allah, the Glorified, for the ability He has granted us to carrying out [acts of] obedience and to keep away from disobedience.
29. One who is supported [by Allah] in his affairs is successful in achieving his goals.
30. Whoever takes Allah to be His adviser attains success.

Notes

1. This is a condition where Allah forsakes those who disobey Him and leaves them to their own devices (see Q3:160)

691. AGREEMENT

1. Excessive agreement is hypocrisy.

692. SHAMELESSNESS AND THE SHAMELESS

1. The worst countenance is [that of] the shameless.
2. How shameless the ignorant one is!
3. The shamelessness of a man disgraces him.

693. IMPUDENCE

1. Beware of impudence, for indeed it drives you to embark on ugly acts and to rush towards evil deeds.
2. Impudence is the symbol of evil.
3. The cornerstone of every evil is impudence.

694. REVERENCE

1. Revere Allah the Glorified, keep away from what He has forbidden and love those whom He loves.
2. Revere your elders and your youngsters will revere you.

695. PRECAUTIONARY DISSIMULATION

1. Espouse precautionary dissimulation for indeed it is a trait of the praiseworthy.
2. He who has no precautionary dissimulation has no religion.
3. Precautionary dissimulation is religiosity.

696. GOD-WARINESS

1. God-wariness is a fortified stronghold for the one who takes refuge in it.
2. God-wariness is the accumulator of [all] purity and chastity.
3. God-wariness is the fruit of faith and the sign of certitude.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

4. The exterior of God-wariness is honour in this world while its interior is honour in the Hereafter.
5. God-wariness is the strongest connection between yourself and Allah if you hold on to it, and it is a shield against the painful chastisement [of the Hereafter].
6. God-wariness is such that there is no alternative or substitute for it.
7. God-wariness is for a person to be cautious of all [the things] that could lead him towards sin.
8. Be God-wary and you will succeed [in this world and the next].
9. Fill your heart with God-wariness and oppose your vain desires, [by this] you will overcome Satan.
10. Fear Allah with some God-wariness, even if it be little, and place between yourself and Him a veil [of shame], even if it be thin.
11. Fear Allah by obeying Him, and obey Allah by fearing Him.
12. Be wary of your duty towards Allah, whom you must eventually meet, and with other than whom you have no ultimate end.
13. Be wary of your duty towards Allah with regards to that which He has created you for.
14. Be wary of your duty towards Allah, [the Lord] who hears when you speak and knows when you conceal something in your heart.
15. Be wary of your duty towards Allah with the wariness that is due to Him, and strive to attain His pleasure, and be cautious of what He has warned you about from His painful chastisement.
16. Be wary of your duty towards Allah with the wariness of one who hears [the message of guidance] hence humbly submits, commits a misdeed hence confesses [and repents], learns [the truth] hence trembles in fear, is cautious [about the Hereafter] hence takes the initiative [to do good] and performs an action and does it well.
17. Turn to God-wariness, for indeed it is an impenetrable shield. Whoever turns to it, it protects him and whoever holds on to it, it preserves him.
18. Hold on to God-wariness, for indeed it has a rope with a firm handle and a stronghold with an insurmountable peak.
19. Indeed God-wariness is like trained [and docile] riding mounts with their riders on them and their reins given to them, so they take them into Paradise.
20. The most protective shield is God-wariness.
21. The most impenetrable fortress of religion is God-wariness.
22. Verily God-wariness is a protection for you in your life and a means of gaining nearness [to Allah] after your death.
23. Verily Allah the Most High has enjoined God-wariness upon you and has made it the means by which His pleasure is attained by His creation. So fear Allah, [the Lord] who is closely watching you and in whose grip are your forelocks.
24. Verily the wariness of their duty towards Allah has shielded His friends from what He has forbidden and has made their hearts bound by His fear, so much so that their nights pass in wakefulness and their midday's in thirst; thus they take comfort in hardship and are quenched by thirst.
25. Verily the fear of Allah is a provision and a place of return. It is a provision that takes one to his destination and a prosperous place of return. The best inviter has called towards it and the most heedful [of people] have heeded to it. So the inviter has told the people about it and those who have given heed to it are successful.
26. Verily God-wariness is the right of Allah, the Glorified, upon you and it necessitates your right over Allah, so seek Allah's help to achieve it and use it as a means of attaining proximity to Allah.
27. Verily the fear of Allah [and God-wariness] has continually presented itself to the people of the past and those who came after them, because they will [all] need it tomorrow when Allah resurrects what He has created and takes back what He has given; but how few are those who undertake it the way it deserves to be undertaken!
28. Verily the fear of Allah has a rope with a firm handle and a stronghold with an insurmountable peak.
29. Indeed God-wariness makes Allah most pleased with His servants and it is what He demands from His creation. So be wary of your duty towards Allah who knows what you do in secret and records what you do openly.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

30. Verily God-wariness is a strong fortress [of protection] for the one who takes refuge in it, and impiety is the dilapidated fortress [of humiliation] which does not protect its people and does not offer security to the one who takes refuge in it.
31. Verily God-wariness is today a safeguard and a shield, and tomorrow [it is] a pathway to Paradise; its path is clear and the one who travels on it, gains.
32. Indeed the fear of Allah is the maintainer of faith and the pillar of certitude, and it is surely the key to righteousness and the lamp of success.
33. Verily the one who has been shown what is in front of him by the
34. examples of the exemplary punishments of the past is prevented by God-wariness from falling into doubts.
35. Verily the one who abandons God-wariness is lured by pleasures and lustful desires, and falls into the wilderness of sins and is constantly plagued by grave (or many) [evil] consequences.
36. Indeed the fear of Allah is a key to rightness, a store for the Hereafter, emancipation from every [form of] bondage and safety from every destruction. Through it the runaway is rescued, what is sought is attained and what is desired [of the Hereafter] is acquired.
37. God-wariness dignifies, immorality disgraces.
38. God-wariness is eschewal [of the forbidden].
39. God-wariness is the best provision.
40. God-wariness is the most fruitful cultivation
41. God-wariness is the cornerstone [all] of good deeds.
42. God-wariness is the leader of moral virtues.
43. God-wariness is a fortified stronghold.
44. God-wariness is the reserve for the place of return [in the Hereafter].
45. God-wariness is the strongest foundation.
46. God-wariness is the key to uprightness.
47. God-wariness is the fortress of the believer.
48. God-wariness is a safeguard for the one who adopts it.
49. God-wariness is the strongest fortress and the most protective sanctuary.
50. If you fear Allah, He will protect you.
51. Indeed you are in greater need of the provisions of God-wariness than you are of the provisions of this world.
52. When you [wish to] guard yourself, then be wary of the things that Allah has forbidden.
53. The sting (or blackness) of sins is cut off by God-wariness.
54. It is with God-wariness that preservation from sin has been paired.
55. Through God-wariness, actions become pure.
56. The garment of God-wariness is the most honourable of attires.56. Treat your [spiritual] ailments with God-wariness and anticipate [and prepare for] your death by it; take a lesson from those who have neglected it and ensure that those who heed to it do not take a lesson from you [for having neglected it].
57. The cornerstone of God-wariness is abandoning lustful desires.
58. The cause of the probity of [one's] faith is God-wariness.
59. The probity of God-wariness is [in] eschewing doubt.
60. Blessed is the one who fills his heart with God-wariness.
61. Espouse God-wariness, for indeed it is the character of the Prophets.
62. Espouse God-wariness, for indeed it is the most honourable distinction.
63. Espouse God-wariness in hiding and in the open, and adhere to the truth in anger and pleasure.
64. Espouse God-wariness, for it is indeed the best provision and the most protective accoutrement.
65. So be wary of [your duty towards] Allah with the God-wariness of one who listens hence humbles himself, who commits [a sin] hence he confesses, who becomes afraid hence he performs virtuous acts and is cautious hence he hastens [towards good deeds].
66. So be wary of [your duty towards] Allah with the God-wariness of one who attains certitude hence he does good, who is given lesson [from the happenings of this world] so he takes it, who is warned so he

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

- desists, who is shown [the right path] so he sees [it], and who fears the chastisement [of the Hereafter] and works for the Day of Reckoning.
67. So be wary of [your duty towards] Allah, O servants of Allah, with the God-wariness of one who has preoccupied his heart with reflection, who [always] has the remembrance [of Allah] on his tongue and who advances [good deeds out of] fear for his safety [in the Hereafter].
 68. So fear Allah in relation to the purpose for which He has created you, and be cautious of [your duty towards] Him just as He has warned you of Himself. Make yourself deserving of what He has promised you by having confidence in the truth of His promise and being afraid of the terror of Day of Resurrection.
 69. So be wary of [your duty towards] Allah, O servants of Allah, with the God-wariness of one who tucks up his clothes in preparation [for fulfilling the commandments of Allah] and makes great effort, who acts quickly during the short period [he has] and hurries out of fear [of losing the opportunity].
 70. So be wary of [your duty towards] Allah with the God-wariness of one who thinks about returning towards the Hereafter, the end [and consequence] of his life's journey and the place of his [final] return, so he remedies his past errors and increases his righteous actions.
 71. Increased God-wariness is a symbol of abundant piety.
 72. Whoever would like success in the Hereafter should espouse God-wariness.
 73. Whoever takes off the attire of God-wariness will not be able to cover himself with anything from the devices (and means) of this world.
 74. Whoever puts on the attires of God-wariness, his garments will not get worn out.
 75. Nothing reforms faith like God-wariness.
 76. The basis of God-wariness is rejection of this world.
 77. Guided is the one who fills his heart with God-wariness.
 78. And fear Allah, who is justified [in punishing you for disobedience] by the warning He has issued, and has a strong argument because He has made the [right] path clear and has warned you of the enemy who enters into the hearts stealthily and whispers secrets in the ears.
 79. Neither [should you] advance nor retreat except with the fear of Allah and in obedience to Him, [in this way] you will become victorious by attaining success and [finding] the right way.
 80. There is no honour like God-wariness.
 81. There is no provision like God-wariness.
 82. There is no God-wariness like desisting from the forbidden.
 83. There is no fortress more impenetrable than God-wariness.
 84. The thing that is rooted in God-wariness is never destroyed and the plant that grows on it never remains thirsty.
 85. There is no dignity loftier than God-wariness.
 86. The most virtuous of you is the most God-wary among you.
 87. Do not dishonour the one who has been elevated by God-wariness.
 88. Be wary of [your duty towards] Allah with the God-wariness of one who was called so he answered, who was penitent so he returned back, who was warned so he became cautious, who passed by [a place] so he took lessons [from it] and who feared so he remained safe.

697. THE GOD-WARY AND GODFEARING PEOPLE

1. The God-wary is one who guards against sins, and the purified is one who purifies himself of faults.
2. The God-wary are those whose souls are chaste and whose needs are few; people hope for good from them and feel secure from their evil.
3. The God-wary are those whose souls are content, whose lustful desires are dead and whose faces are cheerful while their hearts are sad.
4. The God-wary are those whose actions are pure, whose eyes are tearful and whose hearts are fearful.
5. The God-wary person is one whose lustful desire is dead, whose anger is suppressed, and who is thankful in times of comfort and patient in times of hardships.
6. Verily the God-wary are all those [believers] who are generous, chaste and benevolent.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

7. Verily the God-wary have taken [and gained in both] the evanescent world and the Hereafter. They have shared with the people of this world in their worldly benefits, while the people of this world shall not share with them in their Hereafter.
8. The God-wary are those whose hearts are sad and from whose evil people are safe.
9. The God-wary person is content, free from sin and chaste.
10. The practice of the God-wary is taking advantage of respite and preparing provisions for the [final] journey.
11. Indeed successful is the God-wary person who [always] remains silent.
12. For the God-wary person there is guidance towards the right path, restraint from corruption and [a strong] desire for reforming the Hereafter.
13. There are three signs of a God-wary person: [his] sincerity in action, [his] shortening of hopes [and aspirations] and [his] taking advantage of respite.
14. If the heavens and earth were closed upon a servant and then he became God-wary, Allah would surely make for him a way out from them and provide for him from whence he does not reckon.
15. One who is on his guard remains safe.
16. One who is God-wary reforms [his Hereafter].
17. Whoever fears Allah, He protects him.
18. One whose heart is God-wary, jealousy does not enter into it.
19. Whoever fears his Lord is [indeed] honourable.
20. Whoever fears Allah gains success and becomes prosperous.
21. Whoever fills his heart with God-wariness, his endeavour becomes successful.
22. Whoever fears Allah, the Glorified, He dispels all worries and gives him a way out of every distress.
23. Whoever fears Allah, He protects him.
24. Nobody becomes God-wary but that Allah makes his way out [of difficulties] easy.
25. One who guards himself from sins is like the one who does good deeds.
26. The kings of Paradise are the God-wary and the sincere.
27. Those who are wary of [their duty towards] their Lord are driven to Paradise in throngs, having being saved from the chastisement, cut off from the punishment and delivered from the fire [of Hell] into the Abode of tranquillity, and they will be pleased with their dwelling and residence.

698. PUTTING TRUST IN ALLAH

1. Trusting in Allah is an honourable sufficiency for the one who relies upon it.
2. Trusting in Allah means distancing oneself from [reliance upon one's] strength and power, and waiting for what is brought by divine decree.
3. Beware of choosing [a path] for yourself [instead of putting your trust in Allah], for indeed most of the success lies in that which is not reckoned.
4. The root of the heart's strength is in putting [one's] trust in Allah.
5. Verily the perfection of trust in Allah stems from the verity of certitude.
6. Trusting in Allah is [a means of] sufficiency.
7. Trusting in Allah is an asset.
8. Trusting in Allah is the best pillar [of support].
9. Trusting in Allah is the fortress of wisdom.
10. Trusting in Allah is the best action.
11. Trusting in Allah stems from strength of certitude.
12. It is through the strength of one's trust in Allah that the level of one's faith is evinced.
13. Trust in Allah the Glorified, for indeed He has guaranteed the sufficiency of those who put their trust in Him.
14. The strength of a servant's trust in Allah is to the extent of his reliance on Him.
15. It is sufficient for your trust [in Allah] that you consider no one else as a channel for acquiring your sustenance other than Allah, the Glorified.
16. It is in trusting Allah that the true essence of conviction lies.
17. Whoever puts his trust [in Allah] is catered for.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

18. One who trusts in Allah does not get worried.
19. One who trusts in Allah is catered for.
20. Whoever trusts in Allah, He suffices him.
21. Never allow yourself to trust in anyone but Allah, and you should have no hope in anyone but Allah.
22. Everyone who puts his trust in Allah is catered for [and provided for by Him].
23. Have trust in Allah and you will be catered for [by Him].
24. There is no trouble [and distress] for the one who trusts in Allah.
25. One who puts his trust in Allah will never lose His support.
26. One who trusts in Allah has no need for [seeking help from] His servants.
27. Whoever trusts in Allah is catered for and becomes needless [of others].
28. Whoever trusts in Allah, difficulties become easy for him.
29. Whoever trusts in Allah, doubts get cleared for him, his sustenance is catered for and he is saved from tribulations.
30. Whoever trusts in Allah, difficulties become tolerable for him, means become easy for him and he enters into [a place of] comfort and honour.

699. THE CHILD

1. A righteous child is the more beautiful of the two recollections.
2. A child is one of the two enemies.
3. The worst of all children is the undutiful one.
4. The loss of a child burns the heart.
5. The death of a child is [like a] tear in the heart.
6. An evil child destroys one's honour and disgraces one's ancestors.
7. An evil child dishonours one's ancestors and corrupts one's descendants.
8. The undutiful child is a tribulation and a misfortune.

Notes

1. In reference to the context of Q64:14

700. THE CLOSE FRIENDS AND LOVERS OF ALLAH

1. Verily the friends of Allah, the Most High, include all those who consider their death to be near, belie their [false] hopes, and have many good deeds and only a few mistakes.
2. Verily the friends of Allah are those who remember Him the most, are constantly grateful to Him and have greater patience in the face of His trials.
3. Verily the most beloved of servants in the sight of Allah is the servant whom He helps to reform his soul such that he feels sadness [on the inside] and dons the attire of fear [on the outside]; so the lamp of guidance is illuminated in his heart, and he has prepared [for himself] a hospitable reception for the day which he will come upon.

701. LETHARGY

1. Lethargy causes loss in this world and regret in the Hereafter.
2. Lethargy is wastage [of one's lifetime].
3. Lethargy is [a cause of] loss.
4. Lethargy is the trait of the foolish.
5. Loss comes about through lethargy.
6. Counter lethargy with resolve.
7. One who submits to lethargy forfeits his rights.
8. One who submits to lethargy is encompassed by regret.
9. It is from lethargy that laziness originates.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

702. THE GRANT

1. any a grant is such that misfortune is better than it.

703. DELUSION

1. Delusion is not the same as comprehension.

704. SUSPICION

1. Whoever exposes himself to suspicion should not blame those who suspect him.

705. TRUE GUIDANCE FROM ALLAH

1. The best reserve is true guidance.
2. Through true guidance discernment increases.
3. He who takes guidance from other than the guidance of Allah has gone astray.
4. Blessed is the one who hastens towards true guidance before its doors are closed.
5. Following true guidance leads to salvation.
6. Successful is the one who gets illumination from the lamp of guidance, opposes the calls of [his] vain desire, makes faith the equipage for his Hereafter and [makes] God-wariness his reserve and provision.
7. How can the one who is astray be guided aright when the guide [he follows] is heedless?!
8. How can one who is himself astray guide others to the right?!
9. How is the one who is overcome by [his] vain desire able to get true guidance?!
10. Let your garment be true guidance.
11. One who is guided attains salvation.
12. Whoever seeks true guidance through the guidance of Allah is guided to the right path by Him.
13. He who takes guidance from other than the guidance of Allah, the Glorified, has gone astray.
14. He who seeks true guidance through the guidance of Allah disassociates [himself] from the opponents [who oppose His command].
15. One who seeks guidance from those who do not possess it is led astray.
16. One who seeks guidance from the misguided becomes blinded to the course of true guidance.
17. The guidance of Allah is the best guidance.
18. There is no deviation with true guidance.
19. There is no guide better than true guidance.
20. There is no guidance for one who has no knowledge.

Notes

1. Or: How can the one who is astray be guided aright while he is negligent about the guide?

706. GIFTS

1. Gifts bring about affection.
2. Nothing gains the favour of the ruler, quells the rancour of an enraged person, attracts the deserter [to come back], makes difficult matters easy and keeps wickedness [and evil] at bay like the [giving of a] gift.

707. IDLE TALK

1. Keep away from idle talk, for the least of its damage is blame.
2. Beware of idle talk, for the one whose talk increases, his sins [also] increase.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

3. Idle talk takes one closer to [unpleasant] changes [in circumstances].
4. Idle talk harms the soul.
5. Excessive idle talk earns disgrace.

708. JOKING

1. Too much joking is a sign of ignorance.
2. Whoever jokes too much is considered ignorant.
3. Whoever jokes a lot, his seriousness becomes ineffective [and is considered just another of his jokes].
4. Whoever is overcome by jest, his intellect becomes corrupt.

709. THE CAUSES OF DOWNFALL AND RUIN

1. Three things cause [one's] ruin: obedience to women, yielding to rage and submitting to lustful desires.
2. Three things cause ruin: boldness in front of the ruler, trusting a disloyal person and tasting poison as an experiment [to see how effective it is!].
3. Three things break one's spirit and cause downfall: poverty after wealth, humiliation after dignity and loss of loved ones.
4. Three things weaken one's spirit: loss of loved ones, poverty in a strange land and unending hardship.

710. THE SCANDAL-MONGER

1. The scandal-monger is dispraised and reviled.

711. ENDEAVOURS

1. The farthest endeavours are those that are closest to nobleness.
2. Worries [and concerns] are [proportionate] to the extent of [one's] endeavours.
3. The best endeavours are the loftiest of them.
4. Be lofty in your endeavours when you seek something and honourable in victory when you overpower [your enemy].
5. One whose endeavour is great, his care [and attention towards it] becomes great.
6. One whose endeavour is insignificant, his merit is nullified.
7. One whose endeavour is honourable, his value becomes great.
8. One whose endeavour is great, his cause is worthy.
9. Confine your endeavour to that which is necessary for you and do not enter into that which does not concern you.
10. One who rises to the [higher] levels of endeavour [and determination] is glorified [and considered as great] by the nations.
11. One whose concern is not for [attaining] that which is with Allah, the Glorified, does not realize his aspiration.
12. Never concern yourself with anything except that which will earn you recompense and do not strive except in gaining reward.
13. One's zeal is [proportionate] to the extent of one's endeavour.
14. The value of a man is proportionate to his endeavour and [the value of] his action is to the extent of his intention.
15. Nothing raises a person like his [earnest] endeavour and nothing lowers him like his lustful desire.
16. The worries of a man are to the extent of his endeavour and his sense of honour is to the extent of his zeal.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

17. Do not make your family and children your greatest concern, for indeed if they are friends of Allah, the Glorified, then Allah does not forsake His friend, and if they are the enemies of Allah then what is your concern for the enemies of Allah?
18. Do not allow yourself to feel sorrow for what you have lost such that it preoccupies you from what is [yet] to come.

712. IRRESPONSIBILITY

1. One who acts irresponsibly regrets.

713. THE FRIGHTFUL

1. Whoever embarks on the frightful [and risky] earns wealth.

714. DISDAIN

1. Whoever treats people with disdain, [his status] diminishes.

715. VAIN DESIRE

1. Overcome your vain desires and flee from them, for indeed if they capture you they will take you into the farthest depths of destruction.
2. Beware of allowing vain desire to gain control over you for indeed its beginning is temptation and its end is tribulation.
3. Indeed, the thing I fear most for you is [the result of your] following vain desires and having lengthy aspirations.
4. Vain desire destroys.
5. Vain desires are passions of youth.
6. Vain desire is the enemy of reason.
7. Vain desire is the bane of the intellects.
8. Vain desire is an obeyed enemy.
9. Verily if you follow your vain desire, it will make you deaf and blind, ruin your place of [final] return and destroy you.
10. Verily if you allow vain desire rule over you, it will deafen you, blind you and destroy you.
11. The bane of the intellect is vain desire.
12. When your vain desires overcome you, they drag you into places of destruction.
13. Oppose vain desire and you will be safe; turn away from this world and you will benefit.
14. May Allah have mercy upon the person who fights his vain desire and breaks loose from the entanglements of this world.
15. The cornerstone of religion is opposing vain desire.
16. The cornerstone of reason is struggling against vain desire.
17. Deterring [the self from] vain desire is a trait of the intelligent ones.
18. The cause of corruption of the intellect is vain desire.
19. The cause of corruption of faith is vain desire.
20. Counter vain desire with the reason.
21. Blessed is the one who endures [the temptations of] his vain desire, rejects his [false] aspiration, hits the target and acquires recompense.
22. Yielding to vain desire corrupts the intellect.
23. Submitting to vain desire causes ruin.
24. Vain desire is victorious over the one who is led by his lust.
25. He who overcomes his vain desire is victorious in attaining the Paradise of the [everlasting] Abode.
26. The delusions of vain desire beguile.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

27. Being overcome by vain desire corrupts [one's] faith and reason.
28. Combat vain desire just as an adversary would combat his adversary, and battle it the way an enemy would battle his enemy, [if successful] you may gain mastery over it.
29. In succumbing to vain desire there is every [form of] deviation.
30. He who overcomes his vain desire and controls the urges of his [carnal] soul is successful.
31. Indeed the one who is deceived by the temptations of [his] vain desire has gone astray.
32. Combat your vain desire with your intellect and you will acquire right guidance.
33. Combat your vain desire with your knowledge and your anger with your forbearance.
34. Be a conqueror of your vain desire and a seeker of your salvation.
35. If vain desire were to be lifted, the insincere person would despise [and feel ashamed of] his [own] action.
36. One who is controlled by his vain desire goes astray.
37. Whoever yields to his vain desire is destroyed.
38. Whoever overcomes his vain desire is honoured.
39. Whoever controls his vain desire acquires intelligence [and wisdom].
40. Whoever agrees with his vain desire opposes his rectitude [and reason].
41. One whose vain desire is strong, his resolve becomes weak.
42. Whoever embarks on his vain desire slips.
43. Whoever follows his vain desire destroys himself.
44. Whoever opposes his vain desire has followed [the path of] knowledge.
45. One who proceeds with vain desire falls into destruction.
46. With vain desire there is no [reason and] intellect.
47. Whoever embarks on vain desire is afflicted by blindness.
48. There is no faith with vain desire.
49. Whoever yields to his vain desire has sold his Hereafter for his worldly life.
50. One whose vain desire overpowers his intellect is overcome by disgrace.
51. Whoever wishes to attain lofty stations should overcome his vain desire.
52. One who is controlled by vain desire does not accept the advice of any sincere adviser.
53. One whose actions are free from vain desire, his effect [and result] is good in every matter.
54. Whoever follows his vain desire, it blinds him, deafens him, humiliates him and misguides him.
55. Whoever is led by his vain desire, Satan prevails upon him.
56. Whoever looks with the eye of his vain desire falls into temptation and wrongdoing, and deviates and turns away from the clear open path.
57. Nothing destroys religion like vain desire.
58. Vain desire is a riding mount that throws down its rider.
59. Opposing vain desire is a cure for the intellect.
60. The one who is overpowered by vain desire is always wretched and forever enslaved.
61. He is drawing in large buckets [from the well] of his vain desire and exerting a lot of efforts for his worldly life.
62. Following vain desire is indeed a good aide to Satan.
63. Ruined is the one who is led astray by vain desire and pulled by Satan towards the path of blindness.
64. Your vain desire is a greater enemy towards you than all [other] enemies, so overpower it otherwise it will destroy you.
65. Never let your vain desire relegate your knowledge.
66. Do not follow [your] vain desire, for whoever follows his vain desire becomes disconcerted.
67. Do not incline towards your ignorant people (or your ignorance) and do not follow your vain desires, for indeed the one who alights at this stop is on the brink of a collapsing bank.
68. Vain desire is the greater of the two enemies.
69. Vain desire is a worshipped deity.
70. Because of succumbing to vain desire and misguidance, [only a] few will be saved from hellfire.
71. Control your vain desire and be stingy with yourself [by keeping away] from those things that are forbidden for you, for indeed being stingy with oneself is the essence of honour.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

72. Be cautious of the vain desire that pulls the souls down, dropping them [to the lowest levels], and causes them to become more distanced from [the place of] success [and prosperity].
73. The smallest vain desire can corrupt the intellect.
74. There is no damage [and loss] greater than [what is brought about by] vain desire.
75. The most destructive thing is vain desire.
76. The best of people is one who struggles against his vain desire.
77. The beginning of vain desire is temptation and its end is tribulation.
78. Vain desire is the partner of blindness.
79. Vain desire is a hidden ailment.
80. Vain desire is a bane of the intellects.
81. Vain desire is a pernicious associate.
82. Vain desire is the opposite of reason.
83. Vain desire is the foundation of tribulations.
84. Vain desire is the riding mount of temptations.
85. Vain desire is a [cause of one's] fall to the lowest of the low.
86. Do not be a slave to vain desires and coveted objects.
87. There is no enemy like vain desire.
88. Vain desire is a riding mount of temptation.

Notes

1. Taken from Khutba no. 83 of Nahj al-Balāgha where the human being and his life on this earth is beautifully described.

716. DREAD AND AWE

1. Dread is [a cause of] failure.
2. Dread is accompanied by failure.
3. The bane of awe is jest.
4. Dread has been paired with failure.

717. LOSS OF HOPE

1. Loss of hope [in others] is one of the two successes.
2. The root of sincerity is losing hope [and desire] in that which others possess.
3. Verily the most honourable of all people is one who loses hope [in others], espouses contentment and piety and is devoid of greed and covetousness, for indeed covetousness and greed are a ready indigence and verily loss of hope [in others] and contentment are a manifest affluence.
4. Loss of hope [in others] is freedom.
5. Loss of hope [in others] is liberty.
6. Loss of hope [in this world] is a solace.
7. Loss of hope [in this world] is a ready affluence.
8. With loss of hope [in others] comes honour.
9. Loss of hope [in others] comforts the soul.
10. Loss of hope [in others] is a renewed liberty.
11. Loss of hope [in others] is a comforting liberty.
12. Loss of hope [in others] exalts the prisoner.
13. Loss of hope [in others] is better than entreating the people [for what you need].
14. Through loss of hope [in others] there is [attainment of] self-sufficiency.
15. Adorn yourself with loss of hope in that which people possess and you will become safe from their malice and you will acquire their affection.
16. Hastening the loss of hope [in others] is one of the two triumphs.
17. The virtue of loss of hope [in others] is better than the humiliation of asking [for their help].
18. Loss of hope may [indeed] be an achievement [in times] when covetousness is destructive.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

19. One who loses hope in a thing forgets about it.
20. The bitterness of despair is better than turning entreatingly towards the people.
21. The beginning of sincerity is losing hope in that which people possess.

Notes

1. The concept of losing hope here is one where hope is not placed in the help (and possessions) of creatures, rather one places his hope only in Allah.

718. ORPHANS

1. Be good to your orphans, help your poor folk and be kind to the weak amongst you.
2. Whoever oppresses an orphan has severed his ties with his children.
3. Whoever takes care of the orphans, his children will be cared for.
4. The one who takes charge of caring for the orphans and the needy is considered [to be] among the honourable ones in the sight of Allah.
5. One who takes charge of caring for the orphans is favoured in the sight of Allah.

719. ALERTNESS AND VIGILANCE

1. Vigilance in religion is a blessing for the one whom it is bestowed upon.
2. Alertness is illumination, negligence is delusion.
3. Alertness is perspicacity.
4. Indeed you have been alerted so become vigilant, and you have been guided so follow the guidance.
5. One who does not take support through vigilance will not benefit from [the presence of] guards.
6. Alertness is [a cause of] grief.
7. Recover, O listener, from your stupor, and wake up from your heedlessness, and curb (or cut short) your haste [towards sins].
8. Is there nobody who will wake up from his [slumber of] negligence before his time [on this earth] ends?

720. CERTITUDE

1. Attain certitude (or proficiency) and you will be successful.
2. The best faith is certitude.
3. The root of patience is [having] definite certainty about Allah.
4. The root of indifference towards worldly pleasures is certitude, and its fruit is felicity.
5. Certitude is worship.
6. Certitude is light.
7. Certitude is the symbol of faith.
8. Certitude is the best [means of] indifference towards [the pleasures of] this world.
9. Certitude is the pillar of faith.
10. Certitude is the gown of the sagacious.
11. Certitude eliminates doubt.
12. Certitude bears the fruit of indifference towards worldly pleasures.
13. Certitude is the cornerstone of religion.
14. Certitude is the best worship.
15. Verily I am upon complete certitude from my Lord and do not have any doubt about my religion.
16. Through certitude worship becomes complete.
17. The fruit of certitude is asceticism [and indifference towards worldly pleasures].
18. The cornerstone of religion is true certitude.
19. The cause of sincerity is certitude.
20. Cling to certitude and eschew doubt, for there is nothing more destructive for a person with regards to his religion than the prevailing of doubt over his certitude.

EXALTED APHORISMS AND PEARLS OF SPEECH

(Sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s.)

A Translation of: Ghurar Al-Hikam Wa Durar Al-Kalim

21. Cling to certitude and God-wariness, for indeed these two will deliver you to the Garden of [everlasting] Refuge.
22. The strength of one's certitude is [proportionate] to the extent of one's faith.
23. The highest form of certitude is sincerity.
24. Certitude is sufficient as worship.
25. The certitude of one who is extravagant in his wants and exerts himself in acquisition [of wealth] it is not true.
26. If your certitude was sound, you would not have exchanged the everlasting for the evanescent, nor would you have traded the lofty for the lowly.
27. One who has certitude is successful.
28. One who has certitude is saved.
29. One whose certitude is firm, has hope.
30. One who has certitude works diligently.
31. One who is certain about [divine] reward does good [deeds].
32. One whose certitude is strong does not [have any] doubt.
33. One who is certain about the Hereafter does not covet this world.
34. One whose conviction is firm, his worship becomes good.
35. One whose certitude is true does not [have any] doubt.
36. One whose certitude is sound abstains from dispute.
37. One whose heart does not have certitude, his actions do not submit to it.
38. One who has certitude is hopeful.
39. How great is the felicity of one whose heart is filled with the coolness of certitude.
40. Certitude is an excellent dispeller of doubt.
41. Sleeping with certitude is better than praying while in doubt.
42. One who sells certitude for doubt, truth for falsehood, and the Hereafter for this world is destroyed.
43. Do not turn your certitude into doubt and your knowledge into ignorance.
44. He who has no certitude has no faith.
45. Certitude is evinced by the shortening of hopes, sincerity in action and indifference towards the pleasures of this world.
46. Certitude is corrupted by doubt and the onslaught of vain desire.
47. The weapon of the possessor of certitude is patience in [times of] hardship and thankfulness in well-being.
48. Have certitude and you will become strong.
49. Whoever possesses certitude does good [deeds].
50. Those who possess certitude, the dedicated [and sincere] ones and the altruistic ones are from the people of the Elevations.
51. The possessor of certitude is the most sorrowful of all people about [the condition of] his soul.
52. Where are the possessors of certitude who have cast off the attires of vain desire and cut themselves off from the ties of this world?

Notes

1. The People of the Elevations are those referred to in Q7:46.

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And all momineen & mominaat

Notes on this (English only) version.

- *I was looking at creating posters of sayings of Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib a.s. to make available for people to read, this book happens to be the first step in creating an English only document.*
- *In case anyone requires an editable document (in .docx format) they can please contact me.*

~ Mirza Kamal Asghar Changezi

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